



The Right Way
To Fight the
Somali Pirates

Education: The
Case for National
Standards



Zac Efron:
He Might Just
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TIME

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To Our Readers

American Thrift. In our continuing effort to make sense of the new economy, we look at how Americans are cutting back—and looking ahead

THERE IS ONE STATISTIC IN OUR extraordinary poll and cover story about "The New Frugality" that illuminates a wonderful contradiction in the American character: 57% of those surveyed believe that in this new economic environment, the American Dream will be harder to achieve, while virtually the same percentage, 56%, believe that America's best days are still ahead. It's this distinctively American combination of realism and idealism, of hardheadedness and optimism, that guarantees the U.S. will emerge from our financial doldrums with new energy, new ideas and new purpose.

Week after week, we have been focusing on the state of the economy and how it's causing people to change their lives and recalibrate their expectations. For this week's cover story, written by editor at large Nancy Gibbs and designed and produced by deputy art director D.W. Pine and deputy photo editor Dietmar Liz-Lepiorz, we wanted to get away from the media hot zones in New York City and Los Angeles and hear from people from around the country. News director Howard Chua-Eoan dispatched a dozen reporters to talk to



Cover story From far left, Chua-Eoan, Gibbs, Liz-Lepiorz and Pine led a team of reporters and pollsters who explored how the recession is changing us

autoworkers and salesmen, teachers and hairstylists, to get their own experiences in their own words. We talked to people not only in Rust Belt towns and cities that have been hit hard by the recession but also in places that have been relatively unaffected.

In designing our poll, we tried to get at people's behavior as well as their attitudes. It's one thing to say you are anxious about the future; it's another to raid your retirement fund to pay the bills. We found interesting differences tied to age and gender and income. Young people are much more likely to borrow money from family or friends than older people are, and men are more optimistic than women. In the end, no matter when people think we'll come out of this recession, most say they will continue their new frugal habits.

In addition to the numbers in this issue, we'll be revealing some surprising statistics about people's spending habits and intentions on *Meet the Press* with David Gregory on Sunday, April 19.



THIS ISSUE ALSO FEATURES WALTER Isaacson's powerful essay making the case for why the U.S. education system needs national standards. Isaacson, a former managing editor of *TIME* who runs the Aspen Institute and is the board chair of Teach for America, argues that on the grounds of fairness and competitiveness, it's high time for national standards in American schools in English and mathematics. It's a compelling argument, and to accompany the story, I wanted to talk to the man who might actually help implement national standards, Education Secretary Arne Duncan. Duncan, a former CEO of Chicago's schools, has a historic opportunity in his new job. He is a reformer by instinct and experience, and he will have more money to spend on education than any other Education Secretary in history. To those who worry that education is expensive, Duncan says, "Try ignorance." You'll find the interview enlightening.

Rich

Richard Stengel, MANAGING EDITOR



Education chief Stengel, left, interviews Education Secretary Duncan in Washington



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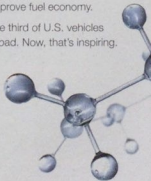
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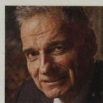
J.J. Abrams

The director and Emmy Award-winning producer of ABC's series Lost is a past TIME 100 honoree



Charles Gibson

The anchor of ABC's World News with Charles Gibson serves on Princeton's board of trustees



Ralph Nader

The former presidential candidate and consumer advocate's latest book is The Seventeen Traditions



Scott Card

Card is the author of Magic Street, Ender's Game and the Women of Genesis series



Geoffrey Canada, founder of the nonprofit Harlem Children's Zone, recognizes the potential of all children and gives them the support they desperately need. The children whose lives his work touches will be the inventors, dreamers, doctors and leaders you'll be reading about in years to come.



Shirley Tilghman is the first female president of Princeton University. In addition to providing outstanding leadership of that institution, she is an accomplished molecular biologist, championing research and promoting women in science and engineering.



Paul Hawken is a relentless networking advocate for sustainable businesses worldwide. His books (for example, *The Ecology of Commerce*) and companies have persuaded businesses to see the efficiency and productivity of environmentally harmonious practices.



Tyler Perry's plays and movies speak from and to the black community, but his message reaches far beyond. Starting with nothing, he built his empire on faith, hope and loyalty; his *Madea* keeps us sane by blurring out the secret thoughts of civilized people.



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HONDA
The Power of Dreams

10 Questions.

The actor and Parkinson's activist has a new memoir, *Always Looking Up*. **Michael J. Fox will now take your questions**

How do you keep your optimism in the face of difficult circumstances?

Leah Min, MONTREAL

I think mostly it's about acceptance. I have no choice about whether or not I have Parkinson's. I have nothing but choices about how I react to it. In those choices, there's freedom to do a lot of things in areas that I wouldn't have otherwise found myself in.

How has your diagnosis affected your beliefs about life, death or spirituality?

*David O'Malley
HINGHAM, MASS.*

It's a big wake-up call about mortality, obviously. I think that's a good thing for us to get out of the way—the earliest you can responsibly deal with the fact that this isn't a dress rehearsal. It's like a 75-, 80-year ride if we're lucky, so let's make the most of it.

How do you think your advocacy has helped change the public view of stem-cell research?

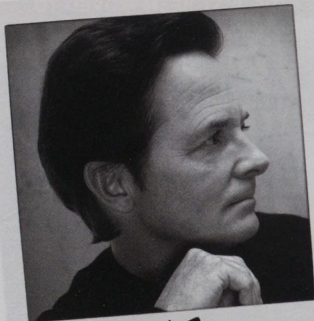
*Angel Paternina
CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA*

I was happy that I could in some ways instigate the conversation. People who may not have considered the issue before considered it. But I think it was a train that was rolling along on its own. It didn't need a lot of help from me.

What do you think is the best argument going forward to support stem-cell research?

*Brad Kohn Jr.
ISSAQUAH, WASH.*

If something has that much promise, there's no good argument to walk away from it. We need to find a way to do the work.



MICHAEL J. FOX
*Back in the "Time" machine.
It's all good!*

Have you ever felt cheated by having Parkinson's disease?

*Mark Moyer
NORTHAMPTON, PA.*

No, absolutely not. It's been a detour that I wouldn't have planned, but it's really led me to amazing places. I mean, I enjoy my work as an actor. But to make a difference in people's lives through advocacy and through supporting research—that's the kind of privilege that few people will get, and it's certainly bigger than being on TV every Thursday for half an hour.

Have you ever found yourself embarrassed by your disease?

*Mailen Van Dyke
BOULDER, COLO.*

Yes, early on, certainly. Now I feel and I say all the time that

vanity is, like, long gone. I'm really free of worrying about what I look like, because it's out of my shaky hands. I don't control it. So why would I waste one second of my life worrying about it?

What made you an American icon despite a body of work smaller than that of actors who have been working for 40 years?

John Houle, ST. CLOUD, MINN.
It's like they say: Comedy is like a frog—you can dissect it, you learn how it works, but it will die in the process. So I never spend a lot of time analyzing why people respond to my work. But I think that it's just the joy, a passion for life, that I think has always been in my characters. Beyond that, I'm just grateful for it.

Do you still act, or do you think your time is best spent finding a cure for Parkinson's?

*Erik Guetzlaff
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA*

I act every now and then. I just did *Rescue Me* with Denis Leary, who's a good friend. It was a really insane job for me to take, but I play a paraplegic, bitter ex-athlete. It was really challenging trying to will myself to be still for any amount of time. But it was a lot of fun.

Do you believe that research will find a cure for Parkinson's during your lifetime?

Natasha Masub, ROSLYN, N.Y.
I do believe we will find a cure, and I hope it will be soon. In a way, it's not about me necessarily getting better. I think that the idea behind any kind of service is that you hope that its impact will outlive you anyway, whether it happens in your lifetime or after. The fact that it happened at all is terrific. If it had something to do with your efforts, great.

What's your favorite movie you've ever acted in?

John Keach, CORNING, N.Y.
Maybe the first *Back to the Future*. It was just such a whirlwind experience for me. I was doing *Family Ties* at the same time, working 18 to 20 hours a day. I was 22 years old. And the movie itself holds up, even though we're now almost at the time he went to in the future. No hoverboards yet. ■



VIDEO AT TIME.COM

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Postcard: Barcelona.

In a nation where creditors traditionally embarrass debtors into paying up, a proposed law could end the humiliation. **Final notice for Spain's costumed debt collectors**

BY LISA ABEND

Global Dispatch
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ON A RECENT WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, Montserrat Vila sat in her Barcelona apartment, waiting for the bullfighters to appear. They were not coming to show off some capework in her living room. In fact, they were not real bullfighters at all. The three men, dressed like matadors in garish tight pants and embroidered jackets, were coming to collect a debt. It's safe to say that at the same time elsewhere in Spain, a monk, a Zorro, a clown and a Pink Panther were doing the same thing.

Because of the country's lax debt laws, the judicial route for lenders to recover what's owed to them is slow and tortuous, so many lenders turn to a more direct approach—tapping into the Spaniard's fear of public humiliation. As a result, companies offering costumed collectors who recoup debts simply by showing up at a home or office and embarrassing the debtor in question have proliferated over the past couple of decades. Now, though, the Spanish parliament has approved a proposal to regulate the debt-collection industry, possibly bringing an end to the tradition of collection via humiliation.

Many people welcome the move. "In this country, they treat people who owe money worse than criminals," says Vila, 49, an employee of a health-insurance company. Earlier this year, she fell behind on her mortgage payments. In March, she received a call from a collection agency that said it was working with the bank that had issued her mortgage and informed her that the next day it would be sending bullfighters to "take up a collection" on her behalf from her neighbors. "I'm a serious person. I've paid my bills my whole life," says Vila. "This is a really painful situation to be in."

That discomfot is exactly what the agencies count on. The idea of using costumed collectors dates from the 1980s, when one company, El Cobrador del Frac (Tuxedo Collector), began sending out



Suiting up A tuxedoed debt collector is attired for maximum impact—and embarrassment

agents dressed in black tie and driving cars emblazoned with the company logo. Others followed, in ever more extravagant getups, all of them banking on the debtor's sense of shame. "Personal honor, your public image, is still very important in Spain," says José Romero of Zorro Collectors. "If one of our agents shows up at an apartment, everyone in the building is going to know there's a debtor there."

In many cases, the collectors don't say a word but simply follow their targets

down the street or sit at a table next to them in a restaurant. "We don't think of it as humiliation so much as making something public," says Miguel González of the Cobradores del Monasterio, whose agents wear monks' cowls.

The tactics work. El Cobrador del Frac now has 400 employees across Spain. Its commercial director, Juan Carlos Granda, says the company has a 63% success rate. And with the default rate skyrocketing—it reached 3.8% in January, up from just below 1% the year before—"we've seen about a 20% increase in business in the past year," Granda says.


The collection companies say they

mainly go after "professional" debtors, people intent on gaming the system, "not families who don't earn enough to get to the end of the month," says Granda. But at Spain's Consumers' Union, advocates hear plenty of complaints from ordinary individuals. "I don't think these collection agencies are turning away clients," says José Carlos Cutiño, a judicial adviser for the organization. "And the line that they walk between persuasion and threat—between legal and illegal—is very fine."

The new bill is intended to make that line brighter. Presented in a committee of the lower house of parliament on March 10, it's designed, according to spokesman Josep Sánchez y Llibre, "to protect citizens against those acts that attack their dignity or invade their privacy." It won the committee's unanimous support—a critical step to becoming law.

Until then, Vila waits to meet her costumed fate. The threatened toreros didn't appear that afternoon, but she is ready for them whenever they do: with a garden hose set to spray from her apartment balcony. "I owe money, that's all. I'm not ashamed of that," she says. "They're the ones who should be ashamed."





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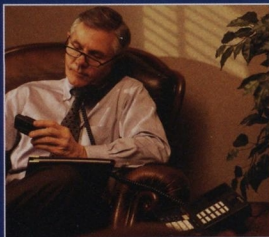
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Inbox



Ethics and Extinction

IAPPLAUD THE TIRELESS EFFORTS TO SAVE endangered species and vanishing habitats, which you address in your cover story, but we need to begin to deal with the root problem: the exploding population of human beings [April 13]. How about a sterilization credit, like a carbon credit, to encourage people not to reproduce? We need to export and help finance information about all forms of birth control in all parts of the world, including the U.S. We have no trouble making decisions to limit the numbers of other species we deem overabundant, so why not our own?

Ann B. Anderson, ATLANTA

YOUR COVER EXCLAIMS, "VANISHING ACT: How Climate Change Is Causing a New Age of Extinction," but the article does not—and cannot—say that. Climate change is mentioned only in passing, and the major causes of extinction are clearly shown to be deforestation and encroachment on habitat. The pictures in "10 Species on the Brink" show nine truly endangered species, then throw in the polar bear, which is 10 times as numerous as any other animal depicted, to try to make the climate-change link. An otherwise fine issue on extinction is thus marred by a gratuitous climate-change reference that is inapplicable and misleading. You can do better—and should.

Fred Gray, SPRINGFIELD, VA.

'I am furious and heartbroken about this ongoing form of torture for our Army recruiters. Thank you, Senator, for exposing the issue.'

Helen Koci, OAKLAND, CALIF.

Crusader Texas Republican John Cornyn led the investigation into recruiter suicides

Tragedy in the Military

THANK YOU FOR "THE DARK SIDE OF RECRUITING," detailing the suicides of U.S. Army recruiters [April 13]. Is it the best training for men and women who choose a military career to feel, as one of your subjects says, "basically forced to do things outside of what would normally be considered to be moral or ethical"? Another probable cause of the suicides: maybe recruiters feel overwhelming guilt for being part of a system that sends recruits into a horrible, senseless war that they themselves experienced. I hope your story helps make some changes in this system.

Dolores Perez Priem, SAN FRANCISCO

I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PUT INTO WORDS the depth of my outrage at the Army for its policies and actions toward its recruiters, which drive some of our most dedicated soldiers to suicide. More aptly put, it is murder, and I have little doubt that the Army will cover it up, accept no responsibility and take no meaningful corrective action. My personal pride as an Army veteran has suffered yet another wound.

David J. Doyen, LANDENBERG, PA.

AS AN "OLD WARRIOR," I READ YOUR STORY with disgust and sadness. The complete chain of command should be reassigned, with a failure noted in their records. Then, and only then, can the healing begin.

Ray Slingerland, MILTON, FLA.



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

■ In "It's High Time," we misstated a statistic concerning policing in the U.S. [April 13]. Marijuana accounts for 47% of all drug arrests, not all arrests.

AS A FORMER U.S. ARMY STAFF SERGEANT, I assure you that those soldiers who killed themselves had plenty of other options. They could have picked up the phone and started working their way up the chain of command. If that didn't work, they could have requested a transfer or simply walked away. Or they could have done nothing and left the Army at the end of their enlistment. Suicide was the coward's way out.

Scott True, MIAMI

Reefer Madness!

KUDOS TO JOE KLEIN FOR HIS PIECE ON legalizing marijuana [April 13]. The tax revenues a legal industry could generate—not just from pot but from hemp products as well—could solve major economic issues. I may have spent much of my high school years in a doobie-induced haze (and have led a successful life since, by the way), but I do vaguely recall something from history class about the repeal of Prohibition and the subsequent taxation of liquor playing a significant role in our nation's recovery from the Great Depression. Perhaps we could make that plan work for us again.

Hugh Jones, SEATTLE

I FOUND KLEIN'S ARTICLE ON LEGALIZING marijuana very disconcerting. Marijuana has many negative aspects, including the fact that it is a gateway drug to more lethal and addictive substances like cocaine and heroin. We need stronger laws and harsher penalties for those who buy, sell or use it, as well as a continued education campaign about why smoking pot is both harmful and dangerous.

Steven Glass, OYSTER BAY, N.Y.

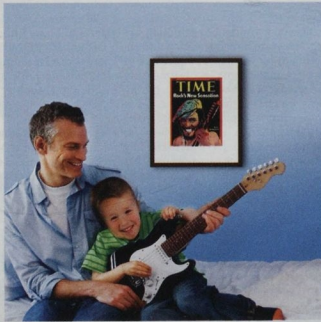


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Briefing

THE WORLD HISTORY VERBATIM

POP CHART MILESTONES



The Moment

4/14/09: Washington

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY about friends in Washington: If you want one, get a dog. Barack Obama is pretty popular as Presidents go, but just in case, he has added a cute little bundle of fur to his Administration. Wise is the leader who plans ahead.

For thousands of years, dogs were drones in the human economy: hunters, herders, security guards, pest-control specialists. But unlike blacksmiths and journalists, dogs have made the most of a

changing economy. By finding a truly recession-proof niche—unconditional-love provider—they've gone from eating scraps and sleeping in the dirt to gourmet kibble and orthopedic beds. Turns out humans will pay billions per year for unquestioning devotion—we'll even pick up the poop. These days, the only humans who "work like dogs" are options-rich Google employees.

But much more is demanded of the Obama pooch, who has the long name required of

all registered purebreds but shall be known to the world as Bo. Though just a puppy, Bo spent his first days at the White House carrying grin-starved television anchors on his little back. He rounded up straying viewers for cable

If you want a friend, get a dog. If you want lots of friends, get a really cute one

gabfests and herded readers to newstands. A Virginia-based publisher is already rushing the first Bo book to print, and you can bet it won't be the last.

Bo also turned the grindstones on which various interest groups rushed to sharpen

their axes. As a Portuguese water dog, the favorite breed of Ted Kennedy's, he managed to feed grievances of conservatives and pet-rescue activists simultaneously. Rush Limbaugh is even recording ads for the Humane Society.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's critics once tried to get at him through his dog, Fala, claiming the Navy had been dispatched, at great public expense, after Fala was supposedly left behind on a remote island. The attack backfired—the GOP hadn't factored in the popularity of a pooch with his own secretary to answer fan mail. America is canine-crazy, which is why a President's best friend can sometimes be the only one he needs.

—BY DAVID VON DREHLE ■

The World

10 ESSENTIAL STORIES



An anti-Saakashvili protester is surrounded by opposition flags outside Georgia's Parliament

1 | Georgia

Brandishing Sticks, Throwing Carrots

More than 60,000 protesters converged on Tbilisi on April 9, calling for President Mikheil Saakashvili to resign over his mishandling of last year's conflict with Russia. The demonstrators, representing a wide range of opposition parties, criticized Saakashvili's lavish lifestyle and his defeat in the war over the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Some threw carrots and cabbage at the presidential residence, released a live rabbit (to represent, they said, his rabbitlike cowardice against Russia) and mocked him in political theater performances. But after a week, the number of protesters had dwindled to fewer than 20,000. Saakashvili has so far refused to step down.

2 | Washington

Tax Day Tea Parties

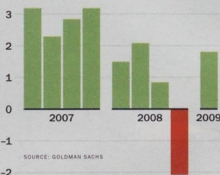
More than 235 years after a group of patriots dumped tea into Boston Harbor, thousands of protesters across the country turned out on April 15 for a series of "tea party" rallies. As many Americans hurried to beat the deadline for submitting their 1040 forms, demonstrators irked by what they consider high taxes and profligate government spending gathered in hundreds of locations. Sparked by CNBC commentator Rick Santelli's angry call for a Chicago Tea Party, the protests were organized on blogs and social-networking sites and backed by prominent Republicans.

3 | Fiji

Trouble in Paradise

A day after Fiji's court of appeal declared the regime of military chief Frank Bainimarama unlawful, his ally, President Ratu Josefa Iloilo, abolished the constitution, sacked Fiji's judges and reinstated Bainimarama as Prime Minister. Bainimarama, who seized power in a 2006 coup, wants to reform a political system he calls racist and corrupt. Critics, however, call him a dictator. Fiji's central bank has devalued its currency 20% to boost exports and tourism amid the turmoil.

Goldman Sachs' quarterly earnings (in billions)



4 | New York City

A Rebound on Wall Street

Goldman Sachs made a startling announcement on April 14 that for once had nothing to do with bankruptcy or federal intervention. The bank posted better-than-expected earnings—more than \$1.8 billion. More strikingly, the firm revealed it had sold \$5 billion in stock and plans to use the money to repay the \$10 billion in TARP funds it borrowed in October 2008. In clearing its debt, Goldman hopes to free itself from the restrictions—like those on executive pay—imposed on firms that received bailout money. Last year, 1 in 30 of its employees reportedly earned more than \$1 million.

5 | Kabul

Women's Rights Under Siege

Shouting slogans like "You are a dog, not a Shi'ite woman!" a group of nearly 1,000 Afghan men and women surrounded protesters at a rally against the Shi'ite personal status law. Human-rights groups say the controversial legislation, approved in March, effectively sanctions marital rape and regulates when women may leave their homes. Some counter-demonstrators began throwing stones before police intervened. Though President Hamid Karzai has agreed to review the law, Mohammad Asif Mohseni, the country's top Shi'ite cleric, accused U.N. and U.S. critics of "cultural invasion." Meanwhile, on April 12, leading female politician Sitara Achakzai was assassinated in Kandahar, allegedly by Taliban gunmen.

Numbers:

4

MILLION Number of children in the U.S. who have at least one illegal-immigrant parent, up from 2.7 million in 2003

\$2.7

MILLION Income as reported by Barack Obama and his wife on their 2008 tax return, mostly from the President's book sales



6 Thailand

PROTESTERS RETREAT, FOR NOW After bringing Bangkok to a standstill, some 100,000 supporters of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra dispersed on April 14 and left the capital rather than face a military-led crackdown. The demonstrators, mostly from the self-exiled former leader's rural base, had hoped to pressure the new Thai Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, to resign. Two people were killed in the violence, and arrest warrants were issued for 14 protest organizers, including Thaksin.

7 Washington

An End to CIA Black Sites

CIA Director Leon Panetta says the agency is no longer operating secret overseas prisons, known as "black sites," and has stopped hiring contractors to interrogate detainees. The foreign facilities where al-Qaeda suspects were held were commissioned during the Bush Administration. The CIA may still detain suspects overseas for short periods of time, Panetta says.

8 China

An Empty Human-Rights Vow?

On the eve of the Tiananmen Square massacre's 20th anniversary, Beijing released a 54-page document promising to improve its citizens' civil, political and economic rights. Human-rights advocates praised the sentiment but said the nation's record is nonetheless appalling, pointing to administrative detentions and the highest rates of capital punishment in the world.

China's plan pledges to:



Provide fair trials and protect the right of citizens to participate in government



Prohibit abuse of detainees and separate prisoners from interrogators with barriers



Protect the rights of women, children, the elderly and minorities

9 North Korea

Nuclear Reaction

Incensed by a U.N. rebuke for its April 5 missile launch, North Korea expelled international nuclear inspectors, announcing it would boycott the long-running six-party talks on its denuclearization and restart the Yongbyon reactor—moves the U.S. called "provocative threats." The rancor comes as the apparent poor health of Kim Jong Il prompts rumors about succession plans.



In Havana, Cubans welcome U.S. family members after Obama lifted flight restrictions

10 Cuba

Now Slightly Less Restricted

In a cautious step toward mending U.S.-Cuba relations, President Barack Obama announced on April 13 that he will end restrictions on travel to the island for Cuban Americans and ease—but not remove—the 47-year-old economic embargo on the island nation. Fidel Castro called Obama's move "positive although minimal."

ALLOWED



Travel by people with family members in Cuba



Unlimited remittances to family members in Cuba



Telecommunications links between the U.S. and Cuba
Satellite-radio and television service to Cuba

NOT ALLOWED



Travel by people with no family in Cuba



Monetary transactions by people with no family in Cuba
All other previously embargoed business

(RECESSION



WATCH)

It's supposed to be the happiest day of your life—not to mention one of the most expensive. But according to research firm Wedding Report, more couples are spending less on their big day. **The average cost for a U.S. wedding in 2008 was \$21,814—down 24% from 2007.** Goodbye, open bar; hello, "bridal cupcakes."

16

Proportion of U.S. books sold in the first quarter of 2009 written by *Twilight* author Stephenie Meyer, according to *USA Today*

31,500

Drop in the number of black inmates in state prisons convicted on drug charges from 1999 to 2005—a 22% decrease, according to the D.C.-based Sentencing Project

A Brief History Of:

The Navy SEALs



AS DARKNESS FELL ON APRIL 12, CAPTAIN RICHARD Phillips was bound at gunpoint on a lifeboat bobbing in the Indian Ocean, held hostage by a band of Somali pirates who had attacked his container ship five days earlier. Saving Phillips' life meant taking out his three captors in as many shots—which the Navy SEAL snipers who rescued him managed to do from the swaying fantail of a destroyer 75 ft. (about 25 m) away. It was just “a day at the office” for the elite fighting force, as author and Vietnam-era SEAL Dick Couch said.

The Navy has deployed maritime commandos since World War II, when amphibious squads fought in the beach landings at Normandy and Pacific-theater operations. The first SEALs—the acronym derives from their proficiency in sea, air and land combat—were commissioned in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy to meet a growing need for guerrilla-warfare specialists. SEALs earned a reputation for valor and stealth in Vietnam, where they conducted clandestine raids in perilous territory. Since then, teams of SEALs have taken on shadowy missions in strife-torn regions around the world, stalking high-profile targets such as Panama's Manuel Noriega and Colombian druglord Pablo Escobar and playing integral roles in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

SEAL training is a grueling ordeal: its core six-month course includes a “hell week” in which waterlogged recruits undergo five straight days of push-ups, running and advanced exercises—like learning to swim with their hands and feet tied—on a total of four hours of sleep. The Navy has more than 330,000 active sailors but only about 2,000 SEALs. The small fraction of recruits who pass training, as Phillips knows, are excellent shots. —BY ALEX ALTMAN

Fearsome warriors *A team of SEALs emerges from the water during a May 2004 training exercise*

THE ONLY EASY DAY WAS YESTERDAY



1962 President John F. Kennedy establishes the SEALs for unconventional warfare

1971 The last platoon of SEALs departs from Vietnam, where their lethal ambushes—and camouflage face paint—led the Viet Cong to dub them “devils with green faces”

1987 The Naval Special Warfare Development Group, formerly known as SEAL Team



Six, is founded; the elite counterterrorism unit was reportedly involved in Phillips' rescue

2001 After 9/11, SEALs carry out more than 75 missions against the Taliban in Afghanistan

THE SKIMMER



40 More Years: How the Democrats Will Rule the Next Generation

By James Carville
Simon & Schuster; 209 pages

NO ONE DOES PARTISANSHIP better than the Ragin' Cajun. In his latest book, the Louisiana-bred campaign strategist, who recently returned to teach political science at Tulane, takes a victory lap celebrating the Democrats' 2008 electoral trifecta. “The myth of Republican competence and fiscal responsibility is shattered,” a victim of the strategic and economic missteps of the Bush years, Carville gleefully notes. If Democrats play their cards right, he argues, they can dominate politics for the next four decades. The key? “To rebuild Americans' trust in government as a force of good.” His excitability is infectious, if only to those on the same side of the aisle. (“Let's go out and spank the Republicans again and again,” he exhorts readers.) Those who tend to agree more with his wife, conservative pundit Mary Matalin, might want to sneak a look too—if just for Carville's reasoned, though perhaps scathing, explanation of how “the demographic foundations of the Republican Party are crumbling.” Professor Carville's class is now in session.

—BY ANDREA SACHS

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Verbatim

'Shouldn't there at least be equal time for our Bill of Obligations?'

CLARENCE THOMAS, Supreme Court Justice, during a forum with high school students about the Bill of Rights

'That a government expresses an opinion without seeing the indictment is laughable.'

ALI JAMSHIDI, spokesman for Iran's judiciary, after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called for the release of Roxana Saberi, an Iranian-American journalist on trial for spying

'I haven't cried since I was 11, and I cried.'

JOE SAUNDERS, of the Los Angeles Angels, after 22-year-old teammate Nick Adenhardt was killed in a hit-and-run car accident

'We have here a limb, not the brain, of this terrorist organization.'

RAKESH MARIA, an Indian detective, on the limited value of testimony from Ajmal Amir Kasab, 21, the lone surviving gunman from the Mumbai attacks. Kasab's lawyer was sacked April 15, delaying the high-profile trial

'He is the son of a bishop, no doubt. It was a miracle.'

WALTER RAMON ACOSTA, lawyer for Viviana Carrillo, recounting how her 2-year-old son once survived a three-story fall unscathed. Paraguayan President Fernando Lugo recently admitted to fathering the child while serving as a Roman Catholic bishop

'I'm looking for someone who I can spend the rest of my life with—or at least the rest of my probation with.'

LINDSAY LOHAN, actress, in a Web video spoofing online dating (and herself)

'Norm, I like you. You lost. O.K.'

JOE SCARBOROUGH, MSNBC host, on Norm Coleman's plan to appeal a three-judge panel's ruling that opponent Al Franken won 312 more votes in the 2008 Senate race in Minnesota



Back & Forth:

Politics

'Mr. President, turn around and look behind you. No one is following.'



Vice President **JOE BIDEN**, recalling his rebuke to George W. Bush after the then President proclaimed himself a "leader" during a private meeting

'I hate to say this, but he's a serial exaggerator. If I was being unkind, I would say liar.'

Ex-Bush aide **KARL ROVE**, disputing Biden's recollection



Web

'The only books I could find without a "sales rank" had gay content like mine.'

CRAIG SEYMOUR, author of the memoir *All I Could Bare*, accusing online retailer Amazon.com of censoring gay- and lesbian-themed books



'This is an embarrassing and ham-fisted cataloging error.'

Amazon.com director of corporate communications **PATTY SMITH**, saying 57,310 titles—including books about reproductive and sexual health, in addition to those dealing with gay and lesbian themes—were removed from the site's sales charts because of a technical glitch

LEXICON

Surgical bankruptcy *n.*—

A term adopted by lawmakers and execs to give the impression that a GM bankruptcy could be quick and painless

USAGE: "A surgical bankruptcy that makes the domestic auto industry stronger is something that may not be desirable, but inevitable, Gov. Jennifer Granholm said in Detroit."

—Detroit Free Press, April 13, 2009



Pop Chart



JAMIE FOXX'S suggestion that **MILEY CYRUS** make a sex tape is somehow less disturbing than his mockery of her gums



Michael Crichton's posthumous book is about **PIRATES**. Even in death, the man is frighteningly prescient



SIMON COWELL insinuates he may quit *American Idol*, leaving no one to prop up Paula



GLENN BECK to take comedy show on road. You'll laugh till he cries



Jane Austen zombie author to write **ABE LINCOLN** vampire novel. Plans to follow up with *Helen Keller: Werewolf Hunter*



KANYE WEST becomes last possible celebrity on earth to launch energy-drink line



BLAGO lobbies for NBC reality show even though his life is basically one already

SHOCKING

Good Friday becomes Great Friday after **GIRLS GONE WILD** commercials air during Vatican telecast



Super-duper Catholic **MEL GIBSON** to get divorced



STEPHEN COLBERT gets space station... treadmill named after him



The Hills star **LAUREN CONRAD** to guest on *Family Guy*



And **THIS**, thankfully, comes to an end

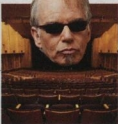
SHOCKINGLY PREDICTABLE



Superman artist **JOE SHUSTER** revealed to be one kinky dude



BOBBY JINDAL to write book



BILLY BOB THORNTON'S band denies concert cancellations are result of disastrously grumpy radio interview



to say. Krug fought strenuously for First Amendment rights and in September 1982 founded Banned Books Week.



INDICTED The U.S. Justice Department charged **Luis Posada Carriles, 81**, a Cuban exile and former CIA agent, with crimes including perjury for his involvement in two 1997 bombings in Cuba.





No Surrender to Thugs

Obama should continue to treat Somali pirates as military foes rather than as quaint Captain Hooks

HAVE WE AWAKENED A SLEEPING GIANT or stood up, at long last, to a local bully? President Obama's decision last weekend to authorize force against the Somali pirates holding Captain Richard Phillips brought the end of a crisis, but it may be the beginning of a longer military effort. This year pirates have attacked dozens of vessels in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, which leads into the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Egged on by generous ransom payments, they're holding more than 300 sailors hostage. Phillips, captain of the *Maersk Alabama*, was the first one taken off a U.S. vessel. A Red Sox fan, a family man, a good-humored snowboarder, a pillar of his Vermont village who had the courage to offer himself as a hostage in exchange for the safety of his unarmed crew, Phillips is not the sort of person Americans are content to see bound, mocked and threatened in the most lawless corner of the planet. This was a hostage crisis. Had the kidnapers made it to shore with Phillips, they would have taken a large part of Obama's presidential authority and poll ratings with them.

On Easter Sunday, Navy snipers shot three of Phillips' captors dead and freed him. Obama passed his first test with flying colors. Yet there was also evidence of indecision. Phillips had made an attempt to escape two days earlier and was hauled back to the lifeboat. Were our forces inattentive? Out of range? Or unauthorized to help? Getting a feel for situations like these takes time. Even Ronald Reagan, with his reputation for decisiveness, never did settle whether to allow the Marines he sent to help keep peace in Leba-

non in 1982 to use deadly force to protect themselves. The Iranian speedboats that threatened oil tankers in the Persian Gulf in the late 1980s confused the U.S. Navy, much as Somali speedboats have befuddled the navies now trying to police the Indian Ocean.

The President is urging that we "work with our partners" to cope with a new kind of bad actor—the guy with nationwide ambitions who is accountable to no nation. Slice it any way you like, it is a challenge that resembles fighting terrorism. There are a lot of suggestions on the

about whether a military response is appropriate. These aren't terrorists, one argument goes, because privation, not politics, is the root of the crisis. To listen to this woolly-headed analysis, you would think piracy was the closest thing Somalis had to a workable aid program. "The threat of death," editorializes the *Los Angeles Times*, "isn't much of a deterrent to hopeless young Somali men who face a choice between potentially making millions on the high seas or starving on shore."

There is an illogic here. If the incentives for piracy are economic, then a decreased likelihood of booty ought to curtail it. Yet no one seems to expect this to happen. Papers relay the boasts of pirates that they will exact "revenge" on Americans. How so? On whose behalf? Such solidarity is less typical of entrepreneurs than it is of terrorists and guerrillas. When Phillips' captors ran out of fuel, they radioed other pirate-held ships for help. There is talk of pirate dens on and near the Somali coasts: Harardhere, Eyl, Boosaaso. "Den" is a quaint, Peter Pan-ish way of putting it.

"Enemy naval base" might be more apt. Somalia is the most failed of failed states, but that doesn't make the pirates apolitical. They don't need a state. Piracy is their state. Trying to erect a livable society in Somalia would be to confront them with a rival, as we discovered once before. The pirates are not "desperate." They are well fed, crafty and competent. They are the maritime wing of the warlord culture that governs Somalia *de facto* and does so in such a way that its citizens don't eat. Whatever the root causes of Somali piracy, helping Somalia might be a worthy goal once the pirates are defeated militarily. It is a pointless one until then. ■

Caldwell is a senior editor at the *Weekly Standard*. His book *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* will be published in July



Pirate cove With fast boats and grenade launchers, the bandits operate from fishing villages on Somalia's coasts

table: A system of World War II-style convoys and escorts. An international moratorium on ransom payments. Some urge arming crews, although assuming that shippers can outgun young men fitted out with the best the Somali black market has to offer is a risky bet. The best solution is likely to be military, based on inspections, exclusion zones, rapid reaction and deadly force. That is how our partners are beginning to view it. French commandos retook a yacht on April 10, killing two pirates. (One passenger was killed.) Last November, the Indian navy sank a pirate "mother ship" off Yemen. Favoring multilateralism over unilateralism often means favoring talk over action; maybe last week's operation is a sign that Obama is not so easily pigeonholed.

In some quarters, there is skepticism

The pirates are not 'desperate.' They are the maritime wing of a warlord culture that governs Somalia *de facto* and does so in such a way that its citizens don't eat



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The Restaurant Owner



The Organic Gardener

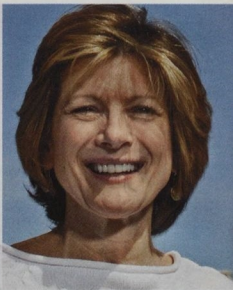


The Casino Dealer

'There are times when people will come in and they'll need a chest X-ray, but they'll ask, "Well, how much is this going to cost me?" Oftentimes, I don't see these people again.'



The Emergency-Room Doctor



The Bulk Shopper



The Therapist



The Unemployed

'I distributed flyers around the neighborhood offering babysitting and elder-care services. I can take care of an infant for a few hours as well as any high school girl. I'm tired of waiting for someone else to offer me a job.'



The Grocer

'Folks are coming in and saying, "My son or daughter has been working for 18 years to attend college. How do we tell this kid that because the economy tanked, he can't pursue his educational dreams?" Some people cry. Some people are very angry.'



The Financial-Aid Officer



The Boutique Owner



The Laid-Off Autoworker



The Movie-Theater Concessionaire



The Gun-Store Owner

SPECIAL REPORT

Thrift Nation

The Great Recession is transforming how we spend, whom we trust, where we save and what we really value

BY NANCY GIBBS

would want this winter in their album?

There's a natural longing to find the upside in the downturn. A college-admissions officer, watching families reassess their means and ends, suggests that maybe the insane competitiveness will recede. The yoga instructor says living more simply relaxes us, as if the entire country needs to slow its breathing. The buyer at the used-car lot feels both frugal and green: that hatchback isn't used, it's "pre-owned," and this counts as recycling. The discount shoppers view their task as a scavenger hunt and take a certain pride in finding the bargain, cutting the deal; 23% of us are haggling more, a profitable contact sport.

No one wishes for hardship. But as we pick through the economic rubble, we may find that our riches have buried our treasures. Money does not buy happiness; Scripture asserts this, research confirms it. Once you reach the median level of income, roughly \$50,000 a year, wealth and contentment go their separate ways, and studies find that a millionaire is no more likely to be happy than someone earning one-twentieth as much. Now a third of people polled say they are spending more time with family and friends, and nearly four times as many people say their relations with their kids have gotten better during this crisis than say they have gotten worse.

A consumer culture invites us to want more than we can ever have; a culture of thrift invites us to be grateful for whatever we can get. So we pass the time by tending our gardens and patching our safety nets and debating whether, years from now, this season will be remembered for what we lost, or all that we found. ■



The Frugal Life
Hear stories about how Americans have changed their spending habits, at time.com/spending

TIME Poll

As the downturn digs in, TIME asked 1,000 Americans how they're feeling, where they're scrimping and what they see in the road ahead. From clipping coupons to raiding 401(k)s, they're making big changes but still holding on to hope.

Percentage of people who believe the **American Dream** will be easier or harder to achieve in 10 years:



Easier
13%

Harder
57%

56%

Percentage of people who believe **America's best days are ahead**

21%

Percentage who have been **unemployed** not by choice



Reported by

Karen Ball/Kansas City;
Laura Blue/Princeton;
Laura Fitzpatrick/New York;
Steven Gray/Chicago; Hilary Hylton/Austin; Christopher Maag/Cleveland; Betsy Rubiner/Des Moines; Tiffany Sharples/Seattle; Maggie Sieger/Grand Rapids; Alison Stateman/Los Angeles and T.R. Witcher/Las Vegas

Percentage of people who feel things have **gotten better, gotten worse or stayed about the same:**



3+

9%
Three years

11%
More than three years



14%
Start of a long-term decline



63%

have **CUT BACK ON ENTERTAINMENT** because of the cost since the downturn began

72%
of 18-to-34-year-olds

Percentage who said they were:

Eating out at non-fast-food restaurants
LESS
56%

Buying tickets to sporting events
LESS
38%

Watching the news
MORE
43%



Going to the movies
LESS
46%

Percentage who are **SPENDING LESS** on the following items:



Gambling
25%



Liquor, wine and other alcoholic beverages
28%



Newspapers and magazines
36%

BY THE NUMBERS

7.4%: Increase in sales of fresh meat in the first quarter, compared with a year earlier. **5.6%:** Uptick in dry-pasta sales in the same period. **2.3%:** Rise in cheese sales. **3.7%:** Jump in sales of vegetables and grains. **15.1%:** Increase in sales of canning and freezing supplies. **6%:** Decrease in casual-dining sales in the first quarter.



CHRIS STRONG FOR TIME

THE UNEMPLOYED COUPLE

BARBARA, 46, AND KEVIN LOWE, 52, GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Both Were Laid Off Before Christmas. Then the Cost-Cutting Began

THE CELL PHONES WERE CANCELED; SO WERE ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS and outside entertainment. We didn't go skiing this winter, and we won't be golfing over the summer. No more wine. We used our severance and some savings to pay off Kevin's 2008 Saturn and pay down the house. We debated whether to cancel the local newspaper, but in the end kept it for the Sunday coupons. We now eat every single item in the house until it's gone. If that means we have curly pasta and penne and spaghetti all mixed up, so be it. I have 101 ways to use half-eaten boxes of pasta. We're much more careful shopping—no more running in to get one or two things. We wait until we have a big list, and then buy only what's on that list—and at the local grocery warehouse, not the food boutique.

You'd be amazed at how you don't even know where your money goes. It took us a couple of months to get a firm handle on our expenses. There are some things you only pay a few times a year and you forget them, and then they crop up and you don't have \$40 for the water bill or veterinarian. I distributed flyers around the neighborhood offering babysitting and elder-care services. I can take care of an infant for a few hours as well as any high school girl. I'm tired of waiting for someone else to offer me a job.

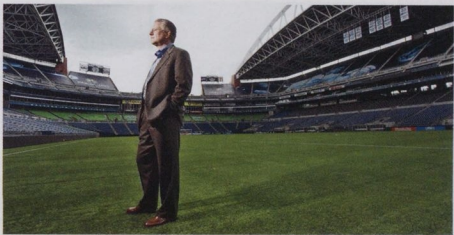
It's hard to invite people for dinner, so we don't accept many invitations. We went to the art show on the day tickets were discounted, and told friends we'd brown-bag our lunches. One of them said we could go to a cheap restaurant, but I can't. I'm not sure they really understand how it is. I know I didn't until it happened to me.

We are still confident something is going to come up. We have discovered we can live on a very small amount of money, but we need to find something with health insurance before our COBRA expires. We take turns having meltdowns.

THE SPORTS CEO
SEATTLE

'We've got to get into the overall relationship business. If we sell tickets one-off and hot dogs one-off and soda one-off, then we're in trouble. I would think in a year and a half, people are going to come to our stadium and definitely notice a substantially different experience.'

—Seattle Seahawks CEO
Tod Leiweke, 49



JACK R. KELLER/GETTY IMAGES



MATTHEW GILSON FOR TIME

THE RESTAURANT OWNER
SUZY CROFTON, 52, CHICAGO

Why There Are No Morels on the Spring Menu, and Other Secrets from the Kitchen

THIS IS THE FIRST [RECESSION IN WHICH] I THINK THAT PEOPLE JUST DON'T REALLY know exactly what to expect. We started to see some changes in how people are ordering. They are ordering appetizers as the entrée. People are just a lot more conscious of what they're spending their money on. Instead of having a \$100 bottle of wine, they're having a \$50 bottle. And skipping dessert. Or they skip appetizers and go straight to the entrée. Tips have dropped—far from the usual 18% to 20%. The private dining room is no longer booked three nights a week, because corporate expense accounts are down. I cut the staff from 18 to 14. We've eliminated the dining-room manager, the second highest position. I've taken that position. You have fixed costs and your payroll, and the payroll is the one you can adjust the most. I'm now serving as pastry chef too. We're going to have morels, but we're just waiting until the price comes down—they're \$50 a pound.

THE AUTOWORKER

MIKE POLDER, 33, LORDSTOWN, OHIO

Laid Off, but GM Is Still His Team

I HAD WORKED AT THE GM PLANT here since 1995. I was in a press room stamping out exterior parts for the Chevy Cobalt—doors and body sides. As recently as nine months ago, it looked like a really solid place to work. When gas prices were high, the small cars were hot. In December 2008, things started to look bad. Sales just fell apart. People couldn't get financing. I got laid off in January. I'm hoping that maybe by January 2010, we can start getting people back in the plant. I really enjoy my job. I love my community. I really love it here, and I would never want to be anywhere else. This is where I was born; this is what I know; this is the food I taste; these are the sports teams I've grown up on. I'd rather be here than anywhere else. GM is my team, and I'm pulling for them.



PHIL KRAVITZ/SHUTTERSTOCK

Shopping



32%

are **BUYING MORE FOOD AND SUPPLIES IN BULK** to save money since the downturn began

Percentage who are **DOING MORE** of the following:

38%

are shopping at discount stores
MORE

37%

are using coupons
MORE



49%

are **SPENDING LESS** on clothes

Percentage who would **NOT BUY A CAR** from a U.S. automaker that declared bankruptcy even if the government guaranteed the warranty



29%

BY THE NUMBERS

6.4%: Drop in clothing sales in the first three months of 2009, compared with the same period a year earlier.

5%: Rise in sewing-machine sales in 2008. **10.4%:** Decrease in bottled-water sales in the first three months of 2009, from the first quarter of 2008.

2.7%: Increase in liquor sales over the same period.

THE FINANCIAL ADVISER
CLEVELAND

'One of my clients—45 years old, a top executive—e-mailed me, "Should I sell everything?" I wrote back, "No, you're fine, you can ride this out." His return e-mail said, "I knew that was the right answer." I've been telling a lot of people that they're going to be O.K. They need to hear that right now.'

—Matt Felber, 39

THE BLACKJACK AND ROULETTE DEALER
MONICA WILLIAMS, 32, LAS VEGAS

Why Gambling Without the Glitz Might Pay Off

MOST PEOPLE COME FOR A GOOD TIME, AND IT'S NOT ALL about the money. As long as they're having a good time, losing doesn't bother them. Our table minimums are still very competitive with the other casinos downtown. Now we have \$2 and \$3 blackjack. I would say that came about in the last six months. Some of the Strip hotels still have \$10 and \$15 minimum games, and I'm seeing more people coming downtown for at least part of their visit. I am averaging about \$2,000 a month gross. Tips are steady. Even though a lot of people are having hard times, there's always the need for entertainment and relaxation. Gambling is entertaining for a lot of people.

I'm doing O.K. A lot of families have been affected, working [in my] industry. But I was fortunate. Most of us here at Fitzgeralds are, because we have regulars that keep us busy. I've heard of a few [layoffs], but it's very minimal. A lot of employees here lost 401(k) money. I didn't fully understand it, which is why I didn't sign up for it. And I kept thinking I'm going to kick myself if I don't do it, and then this happened.



THE GUN-STORE OWNER

JODY WINDSCHITL, 49,
MISSOURI VALLEY, IOWA

The "Obama Effect" Brings A Run on Guns and Ammo

OUR SALES ARE UP ABOUT 33% THIS YEAR COMPARED with last. As an industry, they say it's the "Obama effect." We have never been in business when the Democrats are in office. We've been told that gun sales go through the roof, and they weren't kidding. We can't even get stuff. Ammunition has just dried up all over the country. Right now we're so busy, we've had to hire one person. People are afraid also of the Democrats' putting a ban on firearms—that's the biggest fear factor.

I used to see about five M-15s sold a year. Until about two weeks ago, we were selling about five a week. Now it's three a week. More women are buying, especially older ones. A lot of them are widows who are alone, and they want to have self-protection, just because of the economy. We've had a lot of robberies and break-ins in our area, and they're attributing that to people being out of work.

THE BOUTIQUE OWNER

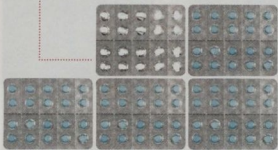
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.



'In 24 years, I've never seen anything like what's happening now. What I've noticed more than anything is that people are completely staying away. They're not even putting themselves in front of things to buy because they're just not buying, period.'

—Jackie Brander,
Fred Segal Fun

20% have **NOT FILLED A MEDICAL PRESCRIPTION** because of the cost



Percentage of people who have ...

Not gone to the doctor → **24%**

Gone without health insurance → **21%**

Postponed or canceled a medical or dental procedure → **24%**

People are **SPENDING LESS** on health clubs ...

27%
LESS



... but **SPENDING MORE TIME** exercising

29%
MORE

Percentage of people who say they **HAVE EXPERIENCED** the following in the past few months:



Feeling nervous or anxious

40%



Difficulty in sleeping

32%



Trouble concentrating on things

28%

BY THE NUMBERS

12.1%: Decrease in unit sales of diet aids in the first three months of 2009, compared with the year-earlier quarter.

18.6%: Drop in candy sales over the same period.

1.4%: Increase in vitamin sales in first quarter, from a year earlier. **9.3%:** Slide in sales of cough and cold medicine, over the same period.



MATTHEW MANSON FOR TIME

THE BULK SHOPPER

GINNIE HALL, 54, KANSAS CITY, MO.

She's Still Working but Worries About the What-Ifs

I DO GIVE SPENDING A SECOND THOUGHT NOW, EVEN THOUGH our financial situation hasn't really changed. Married for 32 years, I still have my good job. I'm in operations management at Sprint; I've been there 13 years. We've had layoffs, but I'm very, very optimistic about the company. But still. We're saving more. You want to have at least eight months' worth put away.

We used to go out to eat two or three times a week. Now it's once, on the weekend. I used to buy fresh flowers, and then I stopped. This lily—it's the first time I've bought flowers since Christmas.

We've been loosening up a little bit. But our vacation—I even had the flights booked, to Monaco. I had the hotel package all together. I have a lot of American Express points. I was getting a big discount. And then I just couldn't go through with it. It would not be a hardship to go. It's just ... in case. So then I thought Honolulu, I looked at Naples, Fla., and now it's the Ozarks (nearby in Missouri).

Why Monaco? You know *To Catch a Thief*, with Grace Kelly and Cary Grant? We love that movie. We've always wanted to go there. We're going to settle for watching the movie again.



KENNY JOHNSON—PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR TIME

Suddenly There Are Long Lines to Buy Dirt

THIS YEAR SALES ARE UP 500%, AND WE'RE selling more vegetables than ever. A couple of years ago, I warned growers and nursery owners that a boom was coming. I was telling my suppliers I don't need perennials—I need vegetables. People are working vegetables into their flower beds. Tomatoes are the most popular plant, and Renee's Garden seeds are a favorite among customers. News about salmonella outbreaks were a catalyst, but the economy really accelerated it. Instead of taking vacations, people are staying home and digging in. Part of it is spiritual. People want to go back to the old ways when times were simpler and they weren't over their head in debt. People are building community gardens, sharing crops with their neighbors. I have been giving classes on square-foot gardening, where people can grow a lot with just a little bit of light. This isn't a fad: Monsanto is buying up seed companies.



THE MOVIE-THEATER CONCESSIONAIRE

SAN ANTONIO



'They don't order bottled water anymore ... At the end of our shift, we sit around at the bar and talk about how much we didn't make [in tips].'

—Adrienne Mauricio, 28



THE EMERGENCY-ROOM DOCTOR

NAISOHN ARFAI, 33, PHILADELPHIA

Going to the Doctor Can Cost a Lot. Not Going May Cost Even More

I STARTED IN MID-JULY. I WAS A RESIDENT HERE, SO I'M NOT ENTIRELY new to the system, but I'm new as an attending physician. You feel like you're at the front lines in emergency medicine. It's both rewarding and very painful at the same time. I feel like I've seen more people coming in in the past half year telling me they can't afford their blood-pressure medicines. They haven't been able to see a doctor for a while. They used to have a doctor, but they're not covered anymore.

They come in when they've reached a point of desperation. They could be having a stroke or a heart attack or kidney failure. But more commonly what we see is people who are coming in with recurrent headaches. They feel lethargic. They feel like they're having blurred vision, headaches. Sometimes they have some mild chest pain or difficulty breathing. They come in, and they say, 'I know my blood pressure's high. These are the kind of symptoms I get.' It's frustrating, because you know you can remedy it temporarily, but in the long run, how can I be sure that these people are going to be seen by a physician after they leave?

There are times when people will come in and they'll need a chest X-ray, but they'll ask, 'Well, how much is this going to cost me? How much is a CT scan going to cost me?' Oftentimes I don't see these people again. I don't get to see what happens after they leave the ER.

30%

have **FAILED TO PAY**
A BILL ON TIME



Percentage of people who are **DOING MORE** of the following themselves:



Home repairs and maintenance
23%



Housecleaning
22%



Lawn care
18%



Percentage who have **TAKEN MONEY** OUT of their retirement savings to pay expenses

27%

23% have had to borrow from family or friends

Percentage of people who have **POSTPONED OR CANCELED** one of the following:



A vacation
39%



Buying a car
27%

If they won **\$1,000 IN THE LOTTERY**, the percentage of people who would probably ...



Spend it
29%

Save it
41%

Invest it
12%

Other
19%

BY THE NUMBERS

2.8%: Decline in overall book sales in 2008. **7%:** Rise in 2008 sales of romance novels. **1.3%:** Increase in sales of contraceptives in the first three months of 2009, compared with the first quarter of 2008. **8.3%:** Slide in sales of baby supplies, such as bottles and pacifiers, in the same period.



THE GROCERY-STORE-OUTLET OWNER
STEVE MULLEN, 50, SEATTLE

At a Warehouse, So Much Foot Traffic, the Floors Are Wearing Out

WE GET THE KELLOGG'S CEREAL WITH MICHAEL PHELPS' picture. It might be \$2 here for a box that would cost you \$4 at Safeway. The gourmet crackers that are \$3.99 at Trader Joe's are 50¢ here. I had to have a professional floor guy come out—the guy who does Key Arena—because we're running into issues with the floor. The sealant is actually coming apart because we're getting so much traffic. More people are coming, and those who come are buying more. It's like a treasure hunt. The people who are accustomed to shopping here know it's not going to be here tomorrow.

It's amazing the stuff that's coming down the pike now. We're selling more wine; we're selling more organic food; we're selling more produce, more fresh things. Maybe these people who were eating at restaurants are cooking more meals at home. The awareness of people that I'm seeing is really keyed into value, where it wasn't before. It seemed like we were going through a period where people would see something and think, "Oh, that's a good deal," and then keep walking. Now it stops them. It's more important to them somehow. And I don't know how much of that is real or necessary and how much is because of the mood.

A Psychologist Finds Some Patients Rethinking the Fast Life

THE WAY MY CLIENTS ARE CHANGING VARIES, DEPENDING ON their socioeconomic status. The working poor are used to doing things within the limits of what they have. When there's scarcity, they feel it, but it's nothing new; despite the stress, their resilience comes through. What I see with the higher earners is a constant sense of waiting for the other shoe to drop. It's the people who are living really well; some percepts are living beyond their actual means. For them, the recurrent dialogue in the sessions sounds like, "Am I going to be able to sustain this lifestyle?" "What if I don't have a job tomorrow?"

Others are beginning to trim the extracurricular activities of their kids or saying, "We're not going on as many vacations as we used to" or "Do we need a second house?" I have one client who works in sales for a small company. Instead of five days, he's now on a three-day week. It has allowed him to write, which is his other passion. And he spends more time with his teen sons. For people who have a value system that includes sources of self-worth beyond what you have and how you display it, they're asking themselves, "Are we really making the best use of the resources we have? And are we happy?"



PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS



PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

THE FINANCIAL-AID OFFICER
ROB REDDY, 43, OBERLIN COLLEGE

Needy Students Are Coming from All Income Brackets

TUITION, ROOM AND BOARD AT OBERLIN college cost \$50,000 a year. And the cost to educate a student is way beyond that. Education is an expensive enterprise.

Folks are coming in and saying, "We've saved for a long time. We had a plan as an extended family for paying our portion of the child's education costs, and we've just been devastated by the decline in the markets or losses in savings. My son or daughter has been working for 18 years to attend college. How do we tell this kid who's done stellar work that because the economy tanked at the end of 2008, he can't pursue his educational dreams?" Some people cry. Some people are very angry.

Most of the appeals are pretty legitimate. It's pretty emotion-filled. And for the staff, that's a challenge to deal with on a day-in, day-out basis, when you hear of people losing jobs, losing homes. It takes its toll.

One family—father worked in the financial sector, mother was a lawyer, and both were downsized. They said, "We never would have been an aid appli-

cant. We understood that because of our means, this is something we would have to pay for." Now they have no income—some savings, but that's dwindling—and they're saying, "How do we not provide this education for our child?"

Many of us are concerned about families' making their decision about where their children should go to school solely on the basis of finances. Will some students end up at places that academically aren't the best for them? Campuses have cultures. Different students fit better into different environments. Do they enjoy being there? Sometimes paying a few thousand dollars now may result in a better outcome down the road. We want them to compare not just price tags but also what they get for the price. Driving a Saturn vs. driving a Mercedes for four years still gets you to the same place. Investing in education is a little different.

At Oberlin we have a tremendous commitment to financial aid. We had to cut other areas. The college is choosing not to have salary increases this year. But what happens if the markets drop by another 15% in the coming months? It's going to hurt our endowment and our families' ability to pay.

How to Raise The Standard In America's Schools

Our students are falling behind their counterparts in the rest of the world, threatening the U.S.'s economic future. Why national education standards are the only way to fix the system

BY WALTER ISAACSON

NATIONAL STANDARDS HAVE long been the third rail of education politics. The right chokes on the word *national*, with its implication that the feds will trample on the states' traditional authority over public schools. And the left chokes on the word *standards*, with the intimations of assessments and testing that accompany it. The result is a K-12 education system in the U.S. that is burdened by an incoherent jumble of state and local curriculum standards, assessment tools, tests, texts and teaching materials. Even worse, many states have bumbled into a race to the bottom as they define their local standards downward in order to pretend to satisfy federal demands by showing that their students are proficient.

It's time to take another look. Without national standards for what our students should learn, it will be hard for the U.S.

to succeed in the 21st century economy. Today's wacky patchwork makes it difficult to assess which methods work best or how to hold teachers and schools accountable. Fortunately, there are glimmers of hope that the politics surrounding national standards has become a little less contentious. A growing coalition of reformers—from civil rights activist Al Sharpton to Georgia Republican governor Sonny Perdue—believe that some form of common standards is necessary to achieve a wide array of other education reforms, including merit pay for good teachers and the expansion of the role of public charter schools.

The idea of "common schools" that adopt the same curriculum and standards isn't new. It first arose in the 1840s, largely owing to the influence of the reformer Horace Mann. But the U.S. Constitution leaves public education to the states, and

the states devolve much of the authority to local school districts, of which there are now more than 13,000 in the U.S. The Federal Government provides less than 9% of the funding for K-12 schools. That is why it has proved impossible thus far to create common curriculum standards nationwide. In 1989, President George H.W. Bush summoned the nation's governors to Charlottesville, Va., to attempt a standards-based approach to school reform. The result was only a vague endorsement of "voluntary national standards," which never gained much traction. In 1994, President Bill Clinton got federal money for standards-based reform, but the effort remained in the hands of the states, leading to a wildly varying hodgepodge of expectations for—as well as ideological battles over—math and English curriculums.

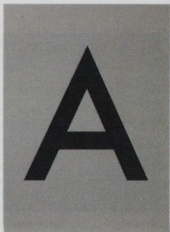
The No Child Left Behind Act pushed by President George W. Bush unintention-

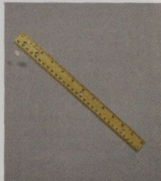
Organizations working on school standards:

Achieve Inc.
achieve.org

National Governors Association
nga.org

Council of Chief State School Officers
ccssso.org

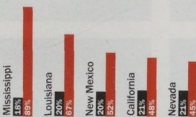




Race to the Bottom

The current approach to standards has encouraged states to set ever lower bars for proficiency. As a result, states can claim their students are meeting standards even as they fall behind the rest of the country. Here's a look at the states with the lowest percentage of students deemed proficient by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test, compared with the percentage deemed proficient by their own state standards.

■ Proficient according to NAEP
■ Proficient according to state test



Source: U.S. Department of Education, ies.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/2008-0012_rev.pdf

ally exacerbated the problem. It required each state to ensure that its students achieve "universal proficiency" in reading and math—but allowed each to define what that meant. The result was that many states made their job easier by setting their bar lower. This race to the bottom resulted in a Lake Wobegon world where every state declared that its kids were better than average. Take the amazing case of Mississippi. According to the standards it set for itself, 89% of its fourth-graders were proficient or better in reading, making them the best in the nation. Yet according to the random sampling done every few years by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test, a mere 18% of the state's fourth-graders were proficient, making

James B. Hunt Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership & Policy
hunt-institute.org

What Makes a Good Standard?

Not all school standards are created equal. The challenge is to establish rigorous common benchmarks that set specific goals for students but don't crush their creativity. Here's how (and how not) to do it.

ENGLISH, GRADE 4

Strong Standard

Distinguish between cause and effect and between fact and opinion in informational text. Example: In reading an article about how snowshoe rabbits change color, distinguish a fact ("Snowshoe rabbits change color from brown to white in the winter") from an opinion ("Snowshoe rabbits are very pretty animals because they can change colors").

Weak Standard

Demonstrate the understanding that the purposes of experiencing literary works include personal satisfaction and the development of lifelong literature appreciation.

MATH, GRADE 11

Strong Standard

Understand how real and complex numbers are related, including plotting complex numbers as points on a plane. Example: plot the points corresponding to $3 - 2i$ and $1 + 4i$. Add these complex numbers and plot the result. How is this point related to the other two?

Weak Standard

Model and analyze real-world situations by using patterns and functions.

them the worst in the nation. Even in Lake Wobegon that doesn't happen. Only in America. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute, led by reformer Chester Finn Jr., has been analyzing state standards for more than a decade and concludes, "Two-thirds of U.S. children attend schools in states with mediocre standards or worse."

Everyone agrees that the existing standards aren't working; what has been lacking so far, on both sides of the ideological divide, is the political will to do anything about them. Bush and his reform-oriented Education Secretary, Margaret Spellings, recognized the problem, but as a former governor, Bush was keenly attuned to the political problem of pushing for national standards. I remember listening to him at

a White House lunch he hosted for a small group attending an Aspen Institute education forum. He challenged former Democratic governor Roy Romer of Colorado, who made a case for common standards. Bush agreed with the goal, but he said it was too politically explosive to make it worth pushing at the federal level.

And yet there has never been a better opportunity to do that. As a candidate, Barack Obama was ambiguous about his commitment to the education-reform agenda of standards, testing, accountability and greater choice. But such doubts were quelled by his pick for Education Secretary: Arne Duncan, who was a cool and driven reformer as CEO of the Chicago public-school system and is also a basketball player from

American Federation of Teachers
aft.org/news/2008/standards.htm

Commission on No Child Left Behind
nclbcommission.org

the South Side who knows how to move the ball. Duncan's position on common standards is clear: "If we accomplish one thing in the coming years, it should be to eliminate the extreme variation in standards across America," he says. "I know that talking about standards can make people nervous, but the notion that we have 50 different goalposts is absolutely ridiculous."

Duncan has a new arrow in his quiver. Buried in the President's stimulus package is a \$4.35 billion "Race to the Top" education fund that the Secretary can use to give incentives to states that make "dramatic progress" in meeting goals that include improving standards. States that fail to give assurances that they will improve standards are at risk of losing education funding from other parts of the stimulus bill.

How to Build Better Standards

THE DRIVE TOWARD COMMON NATIONAL standards should begin, I think, with math and reading. Algebra should be the same for a kid in Albany, N.Y., as it is for one in Albuquerque, N.M., or for that matter in Beijing or Bangalore. (We can save for later the debate over whether that should be true for more subjective subjects like history.) These standards should define precisely what students are expected to know by the time they complete each grade and should be accompanied by tests to assess their level of proficiency. The process should be quasi-voluntary: states should not be forced to adopt the common standards, but they should be encouraged to do so through federal funding and public pressure. In states that shy away from holding their schools accountable to these standards, parents and business leaders should hold the elected leaders accountable.

These 21st century American Standards should be comparable to, and benchmarked against, the standards of other countries so that we can determine how globally competitive our nation's economy will be in the future. Forty years ago, the U.S. had the best graduation rates in the world. Now it ranks 18th. In math scores on international tests, the U.S. ranks 25th; in reading, 15th. As Obama said in his speech to Congress a few weeks ago, "This is a prescription for economic decline, because we know the countries that outpace us today will outpace us tomorrow." We can already see the signs. Major drug companies such as Merck and Eli Lilly used to outsource much of their manufacturing to India and China; now they also outsource

Us Against the World

Nations ranked by performance of their 15-year-olds

MATH (2006)	READING (2003)
1. Finland	1. Finland
2. South Korea	2. South Korea
3. Netherlands	3. Canada
4. Switzerland	4. Australia
5. Canada	5. New Zealand
6. Japan	6. Ireland
7. New Zealand	7. Sweden
8. Belgium	8. Netherlands
9. Australia	9. Belgium
10. Denmark	10. Norway
11. Czech Republic	11. Switzerland
12. Iceland	12. Japan
13. Austria	13. Poland
14. Germany	14. France
15. Sweden	15. U.S.
16. Ireland	16. Denmark
17. France	17. Iceland
18. United Kingdom	18. Germany
19. Poland	19. Austria
20. Slovak Republic	20. Czech Republic
21. Hungary	21. Hungary
22. Luxembourg	22. Spain
23. Norway	23. Luxembourg
24. Spain	24. Portugal
25. U.S.	25. Italy
26. Portugal	26. Greece
27. Italy	27. Slovak Republic
28. Greece	28. Turkey
29. Turkey	29. Mexico
30. Mexico	

Source: National Governors Association, "Benchmarking for Success," nga.org/files/pdf/0612benchmarking.pdf

much of their research and engineering.

The best standards are those that are clear and very specific. For fourth-grade reading, an example would be demonstrating the ability to distinguish between cause and effect and between fact and opinion in a selected text. For fourth-grade math, examples would include demonstrating the ability to calculate perimeters and volumes, multiply whole numbers, represent data on a graph, estimate computations and relate fractions to decimals. Specific common standards would allow textbook and curriculum developers to spend their research dollars achieving clear goals rather than producing various versions for different states. Just because the standards are national does not mean,

thank goodness, that they need to be written by the Federal Government. Indeed, it's hard to imagine a more frightening sight than that of all 535 members of Congress grappling with a congregation of bureaucrats and voting on whether high school graduates should or should not be required, for example, to be able to plot real and complex numbers as points on a plane. Even at the state level, there were times when standards became tangled in political debates, including a protracted "fuzzy math" dispute over whether students should be taught to estimate answers and understand concepts rather than memorize multiplication tables and master long division. When politicians and ideological posturers got out of the way, reasonable educators and experts resolved the dispute by deciding, sensibly, that those skills worked best in tandem.

Fortunately, there is already a process under way that could, if properly nurtured, take charge of writing common national standards. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have been working with a nonprofit called Achieve Inc. In 2001, Achieve helped launch the American Diploma Project, which establishes curriculum standards that align with what a graduate will need to succeed in college, the military or a career. Gene Wilhoit, the executive director of CCSSO, hopes to kick this effort up a notch at a special meeting in Chicago on April 17 by announcing an agreement among 25 states to support an aggressive schedule to devise internationally benchmarked math and English standards for all grade levels. "I see standards as the essential foundation for all education reforms," he says.

These standards could build on the existing NAEP tests, which currently are administered every few years to a representative sample of students around the country in grades 4, 8 and 12. This type of approach was endorsed by the Commission on No Child Left Behind, a bipartisan group led by former governors Tommy Thompson and Roy Barnes that was run by the Aspen Institute, where I work.

The Road to Reform

CLEAR STANDARDS, TESTING AND ASSESSMENTS would permit more experimentation by schools and individual teachers. After Hurricane Katrina, a surge of young and creative educators went to New Orleans, led by Teach for America, New Leaders for New Schools, the New Schools

Venture Fund and successful charter operators like KIPP Academies. Now more than 60% of the students are in charters, and test scores are improving. For such a system of experimentation to work, there need to be clear standards and assessments so that parents and administrators can know which schools are successful. Indeed, the entire national debate about whether charter schools are good or bad could be defused (as Duncan did in Chicago) if both sides accept the obvious: good charter schools are good, bad charter schools are bad, and a system of common standards and assessment is needed to separate the wheat from the chaff.

A national system of standards and testing would also permit the gathering of consistent data, down to the classroom level,

'I see standards as the essential foundation for all education reforms.'

—GENE WILHOIT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

so that we could finally get more rigorous evidence to answer some basic questions: Do smaller classrooms make a big difference, and in which situations? How beneficial is it to have a longer school day or year? It would also help resolve disputes about different teaching methods, like whether phonics or a whole-language approach to reading works best. In addition, we could more easily spot ineffective teachers, and they could be weeded out or offered training resources that have proved useful.

Wouldn't this arouse opposition from teachers or their unions? No, at least not from the teachers' groups that support serious reform. The American Federation of Teachers says clear standards would help ensure that teachers are effectively trained, objectively judged and provided with proven teaching tools and curriculums. "Common, coherent, grade-by-grade standards promote effective professional development," the union wrote in a 2008 report that criticized weak state standards. "A shared understanding of what students should know and be able to do enables the best kind of professional development: collegial efforts to share best practices." Randi Weingarten, the president of the union, argues that a national standards approach would help students while still al-

lowing teachers to be creative. "Abundant evidence suggests that common, rigorous standards lead to more students reaching higher levels of achievement," she wrote in a recent *Washington Post* Op-Ed piece. "Just as different pianists can look at the same music and bring to it unique interpretations and flourishes, various teachers working from a common standard should be able to do the same."

Secretary Duncan has indicated that he will use the carrots and sticks in the stimulus bill to support voluntary efforts to write national standards and to prod states to adopt them. This process should involve advisory boards that represent employers, college admissions officers, military recruiters, teachers, education scholars and parents. It should also be ongoing, because the standards will have to evolve as the needs of the workplace and global economy do.

For example, I learned a lot of calculus, which hasn't proved that useful in my career. But I do remember being confronted at a Time Inc. meeting on digital strategy with the simple question of how many direct two-way links there were in a fully connected network of 50 nodes. It was a long time before any of us could figure out even how to begin figuring it out. Tomorrow's careers are likely to require more knowledge of networks, probabilities, statistics and risk analysis. That's why it would be useful to have the standards-setting body be advised by recruitment officers from the infotech, biotech, medical and, yes, financial sectors.

The U.S. will, believe it or not, eventually get out of the current financial crisis. Then it will face an even bigger challenge: creating a real economy that will be as internationally competitive in the 21st century as it was in the 20th century. All of the recent bank bailouts and mortgage plans will, even if they succeed, build an economic foundation of bricks without straw—ready to crumble—if we don't create a productive economy again. That means creating a workforce that is educated well enough to produce more value per capita than other countries. This will be especially true in the 21st century economy, which promises to be based foremost on knowledge. And that is why the U.S. needs, particularly at this juncture, 21st century American standards for its schools. ■

Isaacson, a former managing editor of TIME, is president and CEO of the Aspen Institute and the author of, most recently, Einstein: His Life and Universe

The Apostle Of Reform

Education Secretary Arne Duncan on why he favors school choice and believes kids should spend more time in class

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION Arne Duncan, 44, will have more money to spend than any other Education Secretary in U.S. history—and with that \$100 billion comes the chance to reshape public education in America for decades. He recently sat down with *TIME* managing editor Richard Stengel.

Should students be going to school longer?

I think the school day is too short, the school week is too short and the school year is too short. And I worry particularly about poor children—children who don't have two parents at home, children who don't have a household full of books. You look at all the creative schools that are getting dramatically better results. The common denominator of all of them is they're spending more time, doing more after school, doing more on Saturdays, doing more over the summer. The other big issue is that ultimately if we don't do more time, our kids are at a competitive disadvantage.



vantage. Kids in India, China are going to school 25% to 30% more than students here.

Where do you see the charter-school movement going? I'm a big fan of choice and competition, and in our country, historically, wealthy families have had a lot of options as to where to send their children. And families that didn't come from a lot of money had one option—and usually that option wasn't a good one. The more options available, the more we give parents a chance to figure out

what the best learning environment is for their child. To me it's not about letting a thousand flowers bloom. You need to have a really high bar about whom you let open the charter school. [You need] a really rigorous front-end competitive process. If not, you just get mediocrity. Once you let them in, you need to have two things. You need to give those charter operators great autonomy—to really free them from the education bureaucracy. You have to couple that with very strong accountability.

Is part of your plan to reinflate No Child Left Behind?

It was dramatically underfunded. And again, we're taking that [problem] off the table. While it's never enough money, historic levels of resources are going into education. What I think No Child Left Behind got right was, it forever put a spotlight on the difference of achievement between white kids and children of color—African-American and Latino. Forevermore, our country can't sweep that under the rug. Those conversations are tough and hard, but they are real. What NCLB did was, they were very loose on the goals—50 states could create their own goals and 50 different goalposts, and [what] that led to was a real dumbing down of those goals. What they're very tight on is how you get there. I think what we need to do is fundamentally reverse that—I think we need to be really tight on goals and have these common college-ready international benchmark standards that we're all aiming for, but then be much looser in how you let folks get there.

Regular folks don't get the distinction between certified teachers and qualified teachers—why the teachers' union wouldn't let Einstein teach physics to high school students because he wasn't certified.

Isn't all that matters that our children learn? That teachers give students knowledge? And not how they became a teacher, whether it's from a traditional route or an alternative certification route. At the end of the day, it is not about a piece of paper coming [through] the door. It's about student achievement.

I think parents look at tenured teachers and say, I don't have tenure in my job—why should teachers have tenure?

What you need is a really clear bar as to what it takes to achieve [tenure]. And what it should be is not automatic.

'With historic levels of resources has to come historic levels of reform.'

It shouldn't be one year, two years and you get tenure. What have you done to demonstrate that you've done a great job in increasing student achievement?

Is there an opportunity now, with the economy changing so radically, to get the best and brightest to go into teaching?

It's a historic opportunity. One of the only benefits of a horrendous economy is teaching becomes a much more attractive profession. Second, you have the President, the First Lady, the Vice President, the Vice President's wife—who still teaches today, which is amazing—talking about serving your country, [saying] here is what you need to do. The final thing is, over the next several years we could lose, due to retirement, as many as a million teachers. Our ability to attract or retain good teachers over the next four, five, six years is going to shape public education in our country for the next 25 to 30 years. You're going to have hundreds of thousands of jobs every year.

There's been a lot in the press about, Well, the President should focus on the economy, the economy, the economy, and the other things that he's putting on the front burner, like health care or education, should be on the back.

This is where, I think, the President's instincts are absolutely right, that the way we're going to create a great economy and a strong country and a vibrant democracy is by better educating all of our children. And this is a cliché, but if you think education is expensive, try ignorance. ■

South Africa Looks for A Leader

Fifteen years after Nelson Mandela's thrilling election, South Africa is preparing for another vote. This time, there's less to cheer

BY ALEX PERRY/EAST LONDON



ON A WARM SUMMER'S day earlier this year, South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), held a rally in East London, on the country's southern

coast, to launch its campaign for re-election. Inside the city's stadium, in a pen between the stage and a sea of supporters in the ANC colors of yellow, black and green, stood the party's VIPs. Many of the men wore Gucci, and the women Prada, but mixed in with them were 60 or so people, of both sexes, in combat fatigues. Their camo caps identified them as veterans of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC's disbanded guerrilla wing. A well-dressed young man in a Porsche hat chatted with another in a scarlet T shirt that declared, "Let's all young people join the Young Communist League of South Africa to crush capitalism as a brutal system and replace it by communism." The parking lot was full of Range Rovers, BMWs and Mercedes-Benzes pasted with giant ANC stickers promising to BUILD A CARING SOCIETY—another testament to both the spoils and contradictions of power.

The ANC is expected to win a fourth consecutive term in South Africa's parliamentary and presidential elections on April 22. But for the first time since it came to power with the end of apartheid in 1994,

that result is not a foregone conclusion. By any measure—popularity, membership, moral authority—the party of Nelson Mandela faces decline. The ANC's woes are a reflection of South Africa's own strange mix of progress and enduring crisis. Fifteen years after the end of white rule, the country remains Africa's economic and political powerhouse, and huge numbers of blacks are undeniably better off. Until the downturn, the economy was growing at a steady 4% to 5%. Millions of blacks have moved from clapboard shacks in townships to real homes, and the business capital, Johannesburg, has witnessed the emergence of a black middle class, even a black elite. But postapartheid South Africa has severe problems too. The country has the world's biggest HIV/AIDS population, 5 million; violent crime is endemic; and the black underclass has actually grown. In 2006, the South African Institute of Race Relations estimated that 4.2 million South Africans were living on \$1 a day or less in 2005, up from 1.9 million in 1996.

Things have become more complicated for the ANC too. Factionalism and infighting led to a party split in November, when a group of disaffected members formed a

The old leader and the new one Nelson Mandela with ANC president Jacob Zuma at a pre-election rally in February





breakaway group, the Congress of the People (COPE). There have also been scandals over corruption, incompetence and abuse of power. Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu refuses to vote for the ANC, saying it has betrayed Mandela's legacy. Helen Suzman, a prominent white anti-apartheid campaigner, called its performance an "enormous disappointment" a few months before her death on New Year's Day.

To his critics, the ANC's new leader, Jacob Zuma, embodies the party's, and the country's, troubles. Zuma won the leadership in late 2007 after a vicious fight with his predecessor Thabo Mbeki that left the party divided and led to COPE's formation. In 2005, Zuma's business adviser, Schabir Shaik, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for soliciting bribes on his behalf, and for years, Zuma has faced charges of corruption, racketeering, fraud, money-laundering and tax evasion. Last month, Shaik secured an early release because of hypertension. On April 6, after three years of trying to bring Zuma to court, the National Prosecuting Authority dropped the

The poor Residents of the Eastern Cape, like these in the small village of Mvezo, have not seen their lives improve much in the years since the apartheid regime ended

case. State prosecutors denied yielding to pressure from the likely incoming Zuma government while arguing—after years of denial—that their case had been irretrievably compromised by pressure from the old Mbeki administration.

Zuma's supporters insist he is just the man to fight for the interests of those left behind in South Africa's first years of freedom. Still, there are questions about Zuma's commitment to racial reconciliation—famously, in a country still racked by racial violence, he chose the Zulu war anthem "Bring Me My Machine Gun" as a theme song—and his competence and judgment. He refuses to answer questions on policy, deferring instead to the ANC's executive committee. His coyness may be wise: those opinions he has aired have been startling. On trial for rape in 2006, a charge of which he was acquitted, he revealed that he thought taking a shower could prevent HIV infection. Among his supporters, all that only adds to his appeal. Zuma has a populist following in the townships, where his earthiness contrasts well with the elitism of Mbeki.

While business, civil society and the press provide far more of a check on government in South Africa than they do in, say, neighboring Zimbabwe, the party's critics see the same bad underlying dynamics at work. Andrew Feinstein, a former ANC MP who resigned in 2001 in protest over the way his party was frustrating an investiga-

tion into a corrupt \$5 billion arms agreement (a deal from which Zuma was alleged to have benefited), says the past few years have seen a "regression in Africa's proudest democracy that seeps into some of those stereotypes of African Big Men." COPE founder Mosiuoa (Terror) Lekota says, "To fight for freedom, you need a liberation organization. But South Africa has moved on now. We need political parties that can deliver services to the people, not reward the loyalty of former activists."

Problems at Home

IF THERE IS ONE PROVINCE OF SOUTH Africa on which the ANC might have focused its efforts to build democracy and progress, it is the Eastern Cape, around East London. Drive out of the city and, after an hour, you descend into a steep, forested canyon along whose floor snakes the River Kei, the old boundary between white-run South Africa and the rolling prairies that apartheid authorities designated the black "homeland" of Transkei, meaning "across the Kei." During apartheid, the Transkei was a place of destitution: thousands of mud-walled, grass-roofed huts where people lived without running water, electricity or roads.

Which makes it all the stranger that the ANC has done so little to improve the

'We need political parties that can deliver services to the people, not reward the loyalty of former activists.'

—MOSIUOA (TERROR) LEKOTA, COPE FOUNDER



South Africa Snapshot

For a look at how the nation is doing 15 years after the end of apartheid, go to time.com/south_africa

region. Today, much of the Eastern Cape is still typified by mud-walled, grass-roofed huts without running water, where boys ride horses, girls carry babies on their backs and families subsist on cattle, sheep, goats, chickens and maize. A new power grid has reached most homes—but supply is erratic. Many roads remain unpaved. In the town of Mthatha, 74% of the population earns less than \$5 a day, and 43% is unemployed, according to a June 2008 report by the *South African Medical Journal*. In 2007, East London's *Daily Dispatch* newspaper revealed that poor maternity care at the city's Frere Hospital was resulting in around 200 stillborn babies every year—and that the corpses were being buried in mass pauper's graves. A tour of Mthatha General Hospital suggests equally grim conditions: paint peels from rotten ceilings, the floors are filthy, and in the casualty department an old woman lies slumped in her wheelchair in a pool of urine.

Then there is the violence. Parents in Mthatha don't let their children walk to school for fear of robbery or worse. The *South African Medical Journal* noted that Mthatha's murder rate was 133 per 100,000 in 2005, twice as high as that of Colombia and nearly three times the South African average. Sexual violence, too, seems disturbingly prevalent. Nobu Sipoka, director of the Mthatha Child Abuse Resource Centre, notes there are no precise data on the incidence of child rape, but says she founded the center because anecdotal evidence from doctors suggested it was unusually high. "It's symptomatic of the unemployment and the poverty," she says. "This is not a happy town." Walls and streetlights on the town's main drag, Nelson Mandela Drive, are plastered with posters offering SAFE ABORTION, SAME DAY AND QUICK AND SAFE ABORTION, 3 HOURS, even a free lottery ticket with every 100% GUARANTEE, 2-HOUR procedure.

An hour away in the village of Mvezo, where Mandela was born 90 years ago in a small gathering of huts on a narrow, windswept spur, the Mandelas' immediate neighbors are outspoken about their disillusionment with the ANC. "My life was better during apartheid," says Vincent Ntsway, 53, who held a steady job in Johannesburg during white rule but has only been intermittently employed since. "Freedom turned out to be just a word. Real freedom, real power, that comes from money—and I haven't got any money."

No Need to Perform

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF MVEZOS IN South Africa, hundreds of Mthathas and as many big-city townships. In its 2009 election manifesto, even the ANC ad-



The rich Members of the growing black middle class enjoy one of Johannesburg's elegant and glitzy shopping centers

mits inequality has increased. "There are a handful of extremely wealthy people whose lives have changed dramatically," Suzman told TIME before she died. "But the vast majority has been left behind. And there is a very clear link between that nondelivery and the violence and protests we experience. People are getting fed up, and understandably so."

The violence is an increasing international concern as the 2010 soccer World Cup draws near. But first there is the election, and as that approaches, many South

Africans are weighing a suspicion that the ANC hasn't delivered on all its past promises because the party hasn't been made to. Granting the ANC a hefty majority—it won 66% of the vote in the last general election in 2004—obviated its need to perform. Instead of focusing outward on improving the living standards of the country, it focused inward on improving its own. That hasn't gone unnoticed and, notwithstanding Zuma's populist appeal, may now be punished. "They're crooks," declares Lucky Maqutu, 33, an unemployed construction foreman in Mthatha and a volunteer at St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission Church. "Come election day, the ANC better watch out. They're in for a shock."

A jolt at the ballot box might prove to be a much needed reminder to the ANC that it is there to serve the people and not the other way around. In March 2007, at the funeral of Adelaide Tambo, wife of his longtime friend and comrade Oliver Tambo, Mandela scolded the assembled party leadership. The ANC's leaders should be "making this country of ours the caring and decent society for which this great South African dedicated her entire life and for which she sacrificed so much," he said. If the ANC gets another chance to lead South Africa, its leaders would be wise to heed those words. ■

'My life was better during apartheid. Real freedom, that comes from money—and I haven't got any money.'

—VINCENT NTSWAYI, INTERMITTENTLY EMPLOYED SINCE THE END OF APARTHEID

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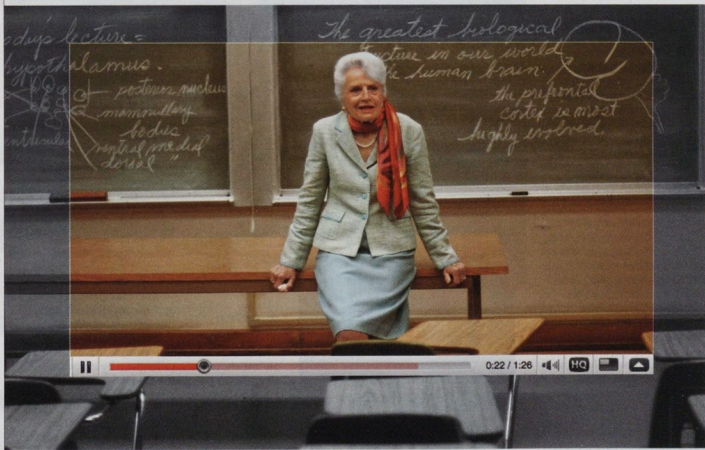
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Life

Stack fast enough, and you could break a sweat

SPORT, PAGE 45

EDUCATION SPORT POWER OF ONE



EDUCATION

Logging On to the Ivy League. Why top-tier universities are racing to give the public free online access to their best lecturers

BY ANDREA FORD

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE most complex mass of protoplasm on earth is?" Marian Diamond asks her students on the first day of anatomy class as she casually opens a flowery hatbox and lifts out a preserved human brain. "This mass only weighs 3 lb., and yet it has

the capacity to conceive of a universe a billion light-years across. Isn't that phenomenal?"

Diamond is an esteemed neuroanatomist and one of the most admired professors at the University of California, Berkeley. It would be a privilege for anyone to sit in on her lectures. And, in fact, anyone can. Videos of her popular course are

available free online, part of a growing movement by academic institutions worldwide to open their once exclusive halls to all who want to peek inside. Whether you'd like to learn algebra from a mathematician at MIT, watch how to make craw-

Legendary lecturer UC Berkeley biologist Marian Diamond

fish étouffée from an instructor at the Culinary Institute of America or study blues guitar with a professor at Berklee College of Music, you can do it all in front of your computer, courtesy of other people's money. In March, YouTube launched an education hub called YouTube Edu, dedicated exclusively to videos from the

more than 100 schools—ranging from Grand Rapids Community College to Harvard Business School—that have set up official channels on the site. Liberated from the viral stew of pop-culture vlogs and silly cat videos, the collection highlights how much free education is out there.

Why is YouTube going high-brow? The answer involves revenue (the Edu hub has room for one or two ads on its home page), social relevance and perhaps a bit of rivalry. More than 170 schools offer content free to the public on Apple's iTunes U, which originated in 2004 as a way for colleges to distribute content privately to their own students. The partnership has been a win-win: universities get a cost-cutting distribution tool, and Apple's products become must-haves on campus.

The bigger question is, Why have colleges started posting all this stuff at no charge? "Schools have always wanted to have their own area where they could be among their peer institutions and help with the discovery of their content," says Obadiah Greenberg, who leads the project at YouTube.

But producing content for global consumption can be hugely expensive. MIT, an open-courseware pioneer that since 2002 has published text materials such as lecture notes and syllabi for about 85% of its curriculum, spends more than \$10,000 per course to compile, publish and license text materials; classes with videos cost twice as much.

Yet MIT's Steve Carson, who serves as president of the OpenCourseWare Consortium, says it's worth the expense, since the online content attracts prospective students, keeps alumni connected and encourages innovation. Schools have decided that these benefits outweigh the concerns about cost, intellectual property and devaluation of elite degrees. After all, the free material does not add up to a diploma, and viewers can't interact with the faculty.

A Few of Our Favorites. These lecturers engage and entertain



Walter Lewin, MIT

PHYSICS: CLASSICAL MECHANICS

AVAILABLE ON: YouTube Edu, iTunes U, Academic Earth

HIGHLIGHT: A death-defying wrecking-ball trick



Amy Hungerford, Yale University

ENGLISH: THE AMERICAN NOVEL SINCE 1945

AVAILABLE ON: YouTube Edu, Academic Earth

HIGHLIGHT: Musings on Jack Kerouac's mystique



Martin Lewis, Stanford University

HISTORY: GEOGRAPHY OF U.S. ELECTIONS

AVAILABLE ON: YouTube Edu, iTunes U

HIGHLIGHT: A dissection of red and blue states



Hans Rosling, Gapminder Foundation

STATISTICS: DEBUNKING THIRD-WORLD MYTHS

AVAILABLE ON: TED.com

HIGHLIGHT: An insanely cool-looking statistics slide show

The volume of YouTube Edu's content, which includes campus tours and other non-academic material, can be overwhelming, but the view-count sorting feature helps users quickly locate must-see videos, which they can comment on and rate on a five-star scale.

Another new site, AcademicEarth.org, lets users give lectures letter grades. (Diamond's brain-in-a-hatbox episode, posted there as well as on YouTube Edu, got an A average.) The much smaller, more closely edited site also assembles playlists of related lectures, like one titled "Wars Throughout History." Richard Ludlow, 23, came up with the idea for the site when he was struggling with an algebra course at Yale and discovered helpful Web lectures by the author of his textbook, MIT professor Gilbert Strang. Ludlow thinks every school should play more to its strengths and not be shy about letting a professor rely on a rival's superstar lectures. "That way, the students get a great lecture experience, and the professor has more time for question-and-answer," he says.

There is clearly a big appetite for all kinds of online lectures, as shown by the popularity of sites like TED.com, which broadcasts talks given by innovators in the fields of technology, entertainment and design. But one of the most interesting consequences of open courseware may be its impact on teachers, who have a new way to get feedback—and exposure.

"It used to be that research was No. 1. Now people are working harder to be better teachers," Diamond says. Sifting through e-mails, the 82-year-old professor reads over messages she's saved from students and teachers who watched her lectures from as far away as England and Egypt. "At this time of life, when everybody else is retiring and stepping aside, thinking they've done it all, you're getting this worldwide connection. It's beautiful." ■

SPORT

Stacktacular. Cups? Check. Timer? Check. Major endorsements? Check. Welcome to the world of sport stacking



Superstacker Purugganan, 11, broke the world record and got an endorsement deal from McDonald's



THE GEAR

Regular plastic cups will do, but they can be a bit of a drag

BUILT FOR SPEED
Serious stackers use cups with holes in the bottom to reduce air resistance

BY S. JAMES SNYDER

BLINK AND YOU MIGHT JUST miss it. The blur of crisscrossing hands and zigzagging neon cups is probably the weirdest organized sport you've never heard of. Dubbed sport stacking, this rapid-fire competition could at first glance be mistaken for some peculiar carnival game. Players are tasked with arranging 12 lightweight plastic cups into various formations; a stacking kit comes with a touch-pad timer and cups that have a trio of holes in the bottom to reduce air resistance. At slower speeds, it seems easy enough: build up pyramids and break them down in a predetermined sequence. But as the game has become increasingly popular—some 15,000 schools and recreation centers worldwide have bought sport stacking kits in the past three

years—the tempo, not to mention the dang-this-makes-adults-feel factor, has really picked up.

After Steven Purugganan broke the world record at last year's championship by up- and down-stacking six pyramids in just over six seconds, the 11-year-old from Longmeadow, Mass., garnered an endorsement deal from McDonald's. And when he clocked in at 5.93 sec. at a regional tournament in January, fellow stackers started sending him YouTube videos of their routines, asking for his advice. "I tell them to keep a light grip, that you need to practice like

any other sport, working to get faster every single day," he says.

More than 1,000 players will descend on Denver on April 18 for the World Sport Stacking Association (WSSA) Championships, where Purugganan will be competing alongside another up-and-cupping celebrity: 14-year-old Luke Myers, who can be seen stacking in a TV ad urging kids to eat more eggs. (The kicker? The *ding!* of an egg timer, of course.)

WSSA was founded by physical-education teacher Bob Fox, who noticed how a simple hand-eye coordination drill could inspire students to compete against each other—and themselves—by improving their times. When he started offering after-school stacking workshops in 1995, the response was astonishing. "You would get a couple dozen students for a workshop on basketball or juggling, but with stacking, there were 200 kids," he recalls. Fox says his company, Speed Stacks, which charges \$30 for an individual set of cups, mat and timer, has annual revenues of \$4 million.

Stack fast enough and you can break a sweat. John Taylor, a PE teacher in Ohio, says he now integrates cup-stacking into more than half his classes, often as an incentive to get kids to participate in more rigorous activities. "We have a relay where students will run 10 yards, then stack a pyramid," he says. "It makes exercise more fun for them." Can an Olympic debut be far behind?



See It to Believe It

Watch a whiz kid (and us clumsy adults) in action at time.com/stacking

Starting a Diaper Bank. Food stamps don't cover hygiene products. That's why one volunteer is organizing diaper depots



BY BELINDA LUSCOMBE

IT'S OFTEN THE LITTLE THINGS that change your life. For Joanne Goldblum, it was toilet paper. As a social worker in Connecticut, she kept noticing that the families she worked with didn't have any. Eventually a client told her that TP isn't covered by food stamps or any other government-assistance program, so people just improvise. (Fast-food napkins, anyone?) In fact, no hygiene supplies are covered—including diapers.

"I saw a mother take a diaper off, empty the solids and put it back on," says Goldblum. Not having enough diapers, she realized, has far-reaching effects. "Most day-care centers require parents to provide their own," she says. And without day care, parents can't look for work or go to school. Cloth diapers don't help, because low-income families tend not to have washing machines or cars

to get to the Laundromat. Moreover, she knew that babies who sit longer in their own waste get more diaper rashes and cry more. And she'd read the studies showing that more crying leads to more physical abuse.

This is how Goldblum came, five years ago, to start the Diaper Bank (a name, she notes, that sounds less comical—and is easier to raise funds for—than the Toilet Paper Bank). These days, she gives away 200,000 diapers a month in Connecticut, mostly to public-housing authorities, tenants' groups and agencies that work with low-income families.

For the first three years,

'I saw a mother take a diaper off, empty the solids and put it back on.'

—JOANNE GOLDBLUM

she drove the diapers around herself and learned to use a pallet jack; today she has two full-time employees and buys 250,000 diapers at a time straight from a manufacturer. She has yet to find any makers who will give them to her free. Goldblum, who works on the project full time but does not draw a salary, has talked to some 50 people about starting diaper banks. "We know of six who have taken the next step," she says.

She advises them to start small. But her dreams are getting bigger. Because children with dirty clothes and bodies have a tough time at school, she'd like to see laundry machines and showers there. She'd like federal assistance programs to start covering some hygiene items. And she'd like the average citizen to realize how hard it is for people to function at the poverty line. Failing that, she'll settle for free diapers. ■

How to Set Up Your Own Diaper Bank

FIND ONE NONPROFIT

Locate a shelter, food pantry or place of worship that wants your help

ENLIST YOUR FRIENDS

Ask them to pitch in, and buy as many diapers as you can all afford

KEEP COUNT

Track how many diapers the nonprofit uses, and commit to providing a regular supply

REACH OUT

Ask other friends, colleagues and community activists to support your efforts

REPEAT

Do it all again for another nonprofit

FOR MORE DETAILS

Download a free how-to manual at thediaperbank.org



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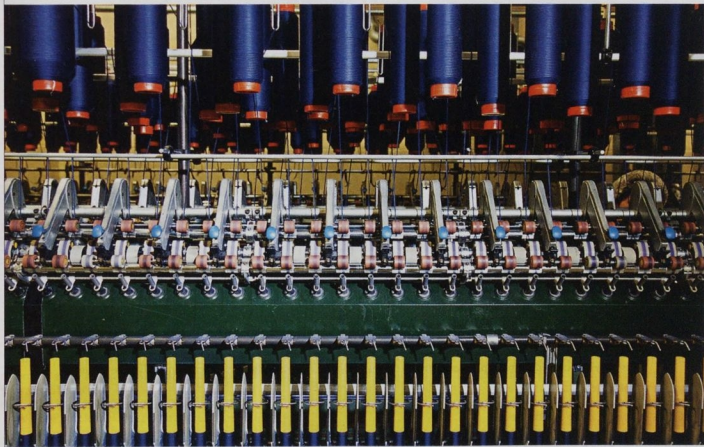
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Preserving jobs—even if the alternative is losing them—can be demoralizing in certain ways too

BARBARA KIVIAT ON SALARY REDUCTIONS

Global Business

MANUFACTURING ■ CORPORATE CONSCIENCE



MANUFACTURING

Spinning a New Strategy. The U.S. textile industry is all but extinct. How one company is bucking the trend

BY MELBA NEWSOME/KINGS MOUNTAIN

THE PRESIDENT OF PATRICK YARNS IS A BIT of an odd duck these days. While most domestic manufacturers are consumed by cutbacks and layoffs, Gilbert Patrick is looking to add to his North Carolina workforce. "We have been very fortunate to never lay off a single associate due to the economy in 45 years," says Patrick. Just what economy is he working in?

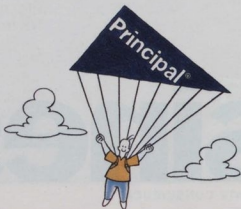
Patrick's roots in the North Carolina textile industry stretch back more than a hundred years. In the early 1900s, his grandfather started Kings Mountain Cotton Oil Co., which consisted of a cotton gin, an oil mill, a coal yard and an ice plant—a business for every season. Those industries began to wane in the 1960s, so his father H.L. Patrick bought some used textile equipment and started Patrick Yarns, focusing exclu-

sively on spinning industrial mop yarn.

Fifty years ago, there were 10 family-owned spinning plants in Kings Mountain and hundreds of textile mills across the Carolinas, employing hundreds of thousands of people. You know how that story went. Patrick Yarns is the only family-



Rich in fiber Ring spinners at the Patrick Yarns plant. The company specializes in not specializing



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owned spinning plant still standing in the small mill town, and billion-dollar corporations like Springs and Pillowtex have either moved their manufacturing overseas or vanished. The bigger picture is even worse. According to the U.S. Labor Department, the country lost more than 4 million manufacturing jobs from 2000 to 2008, a number that is likely to rise when the damage from this recession is counted.

While many domestic manufacturers increasingly rely on undocumented workers who earn minimum wage and receive no benefits, Patrick credits his company's environmentally friendly business practices, above-average pay and good employee benefits for making the firm more, not less, competitive. And he lays most of the blame for the decimated manufacturing industry on an uneven playing field with China. "The [previous] Administration refused to make China play by the rules," he says. "If China stops the illegal subsidies they're giving their industries and does something to offset the currency manipulation, we're good to go."

Patrick is not looking for government intervention to save his business, however. The company's manufacturing business model may seem counterintuitive. In a world where the efficiencies of scale have prompted textilemakers to mass-produce a limited line of goods, Patrick Yarns spins a wide range of products for a diverse group of customers. While a maker of industrial conveyor belts requires a sturdy yarn with minimal flexibility, for example, a safety-apparel manufacturer needs yarn that offers protection from cuts and heat. Patrick spins highly abrasion-resistant yarn for military applications, moisture-absorption and -retention yarn for fiber-optic cables and antimicrobial yarn for water filtration.

The broad-reach strategy has worked. When Patrick took over operation of the business in 1993, the company ran a single plant with 50 employees. Today there are 170 employees and two state-of-the-art mills with more than 426,000 sq. ft. (about 40,000 sq m) of manufacturing space operating three shifts, six days a week.

In the company's oldest mill, located across town from the office, nearly a dozen different products are being made simultaneously. The process is complex, time-consuming and challenging. Nevertheless, manufacturing director Mitch Hensley says this specialized production process is worth the headache and is a big part of why the company has held its own in a tough manufacturing environment. "You cannot make this business work by just spinning commodity yarn, making commodity-type fabrics and com-

How Yarn Is Made

THE MATERIALS



acrylic bamboo corn glass
hemp milk money nylon plastic
polyester stainless steel Teflon

THE PROCESS



1 Polyester fiber, called soda-pop green, that's made from plastic soft-drink bottles 2 A roving machine that hones fibers and reduces them to the appropriate size 3 Roving bobbins, where yarn hangs before it's twisted to add strength and resistance 4 The finished product

peting only on price," says Hensley. "We take a market and hone it and make the highest-quality [yarn] at the lowest price. We're constantly trying to find the next new thing."

When describing exactly what he makes, Patrick cribbs from a well-known ad campaign: "We don't make the products you buy. We make the products you buy better." Most yarn spinners, says Patrick, "will supply you with a list of yarns and say, 'Here's the prices.' We haven't tried to be everything to everybody in one market. We focus on partnering with our customers to engineer products and services to keep their product line innovative and profitable. Our approach is, 'Here are our capabilities. This is our expertise. Where can we be of assistance?'"

This strategy earned the yarnmaker a loyal customer in the protective-glove industry. Although that company's existing product line met cut-protection specs, low abrasion properties contributed to a short life span. Patrick Yarns developed a fiber that could double the cut protection and increase the abrasion resistance more than 300%. A minimal increase in production cost resulted in a longer-lasting, more malleable product that saved money over time. Patrick also creates earth-friendly products and operates the EarthSpan recycling program, which uses fibers from finished apparel or fabric and incorporates customers' unwanted textiles and scraps into engineered yarns or products that can then be sold in other markets.

Supplying fibers to so many different markets means the company is not reliant on any one segment for survival. Patrick has made production evolution and new designs the key components of his business model. Patrick Yarns holds nine patents and six trademarks in engineered yarns and those used for filtration. Natural fibers such as cotton and hemp end up in blankets and upholstery. Synthetic yarns have a variety of commercial uses, including in water filtration, as carpet backing and for automotive fan belts. The technical yarns developed from stainless steel, glass or Teflon find their way into fiber-optic cables and bushings used in spacecraft.

"The blanket-yarn market has disappeared, but we're developing a different yarn that will replace it," says Patrick. "This is unlike any recession we have experienced in most of our lifetimes, and it's cutting across virtually all segments of the economy. So we're doing everything possible to lessen the impact and create new avenues for business." It's a lesson that many in the U.S. textile business never learned. ■



Spin Cycle

To see more photos of Patrick Yarns, visit time.com/yarn

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CORPORATE CONSCIENCE

Do Pay Cuts Pay Off? Firms are reducing salaries to preserve jobs. But that trade-off quickly gets complicated

BY BARBARA KIVIAT

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, CASINO MOGUL STEVE Wynn took a stand on layoffs. The gaming industry is flailing—Nevada regulators recently formed a task force on bankruptcies—but when it came to cutting costs by cutting employees, Wynn wouldn't hear of it.

Instead, Wynn announced that everyone at his company's two Las Vegas properties, Wynn and Encore, would take a pay cut. Salaried workers earning \$150,000 or more would see a 15% drop in their paychecks; those making less would take a 10% hit. Hourly employees would go from a 40-hour to a 32-hour week. The idea: save millions of dollars without putting anyone out of a job while maintaining the service level at the luxury hotels. "We don't want anybody on unemployment here," Wynn said at the time, "or without insurance."

Let's hope it works. Pay cuts to avoid layoffs have become increasingly popular in corporate America. It's a choice that oozes compassion (never mind that many of these pay cuts become permanent) and keeps companies poised to quickly scale

operations back to full force when the economy rebounds. But that's a big contingency, one that firms trying to do the right thing for both workers and shareholders are starting to trip over.

In December, FedEx announced that its senior executives would earn 7.5% to 10% less, while its U.S.-based salaried workers would take a 5% haircut—affecting 36,000 people. "But even these measures," CEO Fred Smith said in a message to employees, "may not be enough to offset the rapidly deteriorating economy that has hit our industry so hard." In early April, the company let go of 1,000 employees.

And that's problematic. One reason companies opt for pay cuts is to preserve

'Initially, this sounds really good to people because we're all chipping in. There's a sense of loyalty. But what if you don't win the war?'

—MITCHELL LEE MARKS,
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

worker morale, but that can be a delicate thing. "Initially, this sounds really good to people because we're all chipping in. It's almost like in World War II when housewives bought organ meat instead of steaks and chops to save meat for the boys," says Mitchell Lee Marks, a professor at San Francisco State University's College of Business. "There's a sense of camaraderie and loyalty. But what if you don't win the war? Then why did we do that?"

Preserving jobs—even if the alternative is losing them—can be demoralizing in certain ways too. For top execs, a cut may mean it's time to dial back on the trips to St. Bart's. For line workers, who've probably calculated exactly how much mortgage and college tuition they can afford based on their salaries, the effect is more jarring.

When Acco Brands, an office-supply company that makes products like Swingline staplers, imposed a massive 47% pay cut for six weeks, it established an emergency-loan program for employees who couldn't make ends meet on a shrunken paycheck. "It impacts standard of living," says Truman Bewley, an economist at Yale who has studied the ways companies cut back during recessions. "People don't quickly forget a pay cut."

Potential pitfalls aside, the number of companies that are slashing paychecks is rising. According to a survey of 245 large U.S. companies by the human-resources consultancy Watson Wyatt, 5% of firms had reduced salaries by December. In February that figure was up to 7%. And the proportion of companies shortening the workweek—a way to cut overall pay for hourly employees—jumped to 13%, from 2%. "Six months ago, all the questions I got were about severance," says Steve Gross, who runs the employee-compensation consulting group for the HR outfit Mercer. "Now—including twice today—I'm getting questions from companies saying, 'We want to reduce wages, and we're thinking of reducing hours.'"

That shift—and a drop in the number of companies telling Watson Wyatt they're planning layoffs—could lead a person to take a rosier view of the economy. "At some point, we're going to emerge from this recession, and companies know they need to emerge with some sort of staff," says Laura Sejen, head of Watson Wyatt's strategic-compensation group.

Less optimistically, firms might be realizing they've let go of so many already, more cuts would hit bone. Also, reducing paychecks during a recession can provide cover for companies that had been looking to trim labor costs anyway. But maybe we should hope for purer intentions. And that the plan for avoiding layoffs works. ■

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Scan a list of 2009's major releases and you'll find almost as many reissues as originals

MUSIC, PAGE 53

Arts



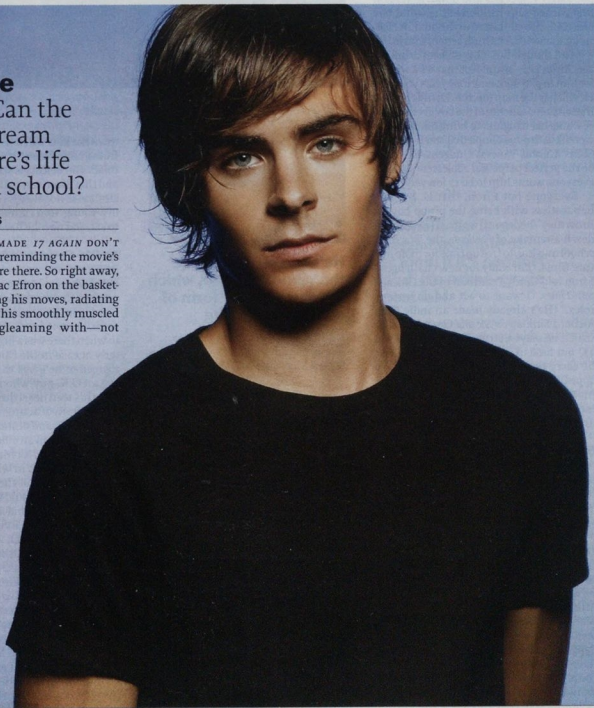
MOVIES TELEVISION BOOKS MUSIC SHORT LIST

MOVIES

Zac to the Future. Can the tweens' dream prove there's life after high school?

BY RICHARD CORLISS

THE PEOPLE WHO MADE *17 AGAIN* DON'T want to waste time reminding the movie's core fans why they're there. So right away, we see a shirtless Zac Efron on the basketball court, practicing his moves, radiating an innocent musk, his smoothly muscled torso seemingly gleaming with—not



sweat—dew. The camera not only loves the 21-year-old actor but laps him; it wants to wring the moisture from his socks and drink it. Few female stars of Hollywood's golden age received the luminous, slow-motion, soft-focus devotion Efron gets here. The idea is to stir the audience, and not just the young girls, to a collective rapturous sigh.

17 Again—the film is a body-swap comedy about a sour guy in his 30s (Matthew Perry) who gets to inhabit his cool teenage self (Efron)—could be the title of the young star's career. As basketball stud and dance master Troy Bolton, he headlined three editions of Disney's *High School Musical*: two wildly popular TV specials and a movie version that earned \$251 million at the world box office. He also co-starred in the hit film *Hairspray*, a savvy, '60s high school musical.

And though he's now of legal drinking age, Efron is 17 again. Not that it's a stretch for him to play someone four years younger. He still has the mop top, the downy skin and the sensuous sanctity of the boy every mother wants her daughter to bring home—if he weren't dating his dimpled co-star from *High School Musical*, Vanessa Hudgens. He could be the perfect perpetual adolescent. It's as if everyone wants him to be 17 forever.

Everyone but Efron, that is. By now he's restless with being the pinup boy on Brownies' bedroom walls. He's turned down a remake of *Footloose*, the '80s high school musical, to free up time for more mature films. "I'm ready for new challenges," Efron told Cindy Pearlman of the *Chicago Sun-Times*. "I want to act and do serious roles." (He's already made an indie film, Richard Linklater's *Me and Orson Welles*, in which he plays a struggling actor who's ... 17.) But how to make the transition? Does he carry the tweens into their teens? Try appealing to an older crowd, as he did with his adroit hosting of *Saturday Night Live*'s this month? Decisions, decisions ... that only a dreamboat du jour has to worry about.

Boy to Man to Boy

IN 1989, MIKE O'DONNELL IS HIS HIGH school's star point guard. (It is the persistent delusion of Efron movies that a 5-ft. 9-in. white kid would be coveted by college scouts—for the basketball team, not the drama department.) As the big game begins, Mike learns from his girlfriend Scarlet that she is pregnant. Stunned, he leaves the court, feeling his duty is his destiny. Flash-forward 20 years and the cheers have faded. Mike (Perry) has lost his job; Scarlet (Leslie Mann) has told him she wants a divorce; his teenage kids, son Alex (Sterling Knight) and daughter Maggie (Michelle Trachtenberg), have no time for their clueless dad. If he could just go back to his glory years, what would he do to make his adult life better?



He's utterly at ease in the camera's gaze, which may be a higher form of acting: star acting

Father (Efron) and son (Knight) in *17 Again*, top; Efron and Hudgens, the *High School Musical* dream teens, above

The obvious answer—wear a condom—does not lend itself to a redemption movie. So a magical janitor, a kind of hobo Gandalf, appears, and—*poof!*—Mike is 17 again at his old school, only it's today; he's got the body of a teen god and the crafty mind of a 37-year-old loser. Among his classmates are his two kids, whom he quickly befriends so he can snoop on his wife. Oddly, she and Maggie are both attracted to the newcomer. Cue the comedy complications. What if Maggie wanted to have sex with this dreamy teen—her father? And what if Scarlet got an erotic yen for this 17-year-old—her husband? Scarlet's relation to Mike, once restless wife to depressive husband, is suddenly cougar to boychick.

Filching from the '80s body-switch parables *Peggy Sue Got Married* and *Big in* ways that are by turns perplexing, annoying and endearing, *17 Again* has lessons in

tow: that kids will take fatherly advice only from another teen, that a life full of compromises and defeats is still worth cherishing and that Efron can nail a tearful public declaration of hopeless love with the assurance of a young Tom Hanks. He said he wanted to act, and now he has—pretty well.

An Old-Fashioned Star

NO QUESTION THAT EFRON IS A MOVIE STAR, but of what era? Adept at comedy and solemnity, synthesizing Michael J. Fox and David Cassidy in their early adorable phases, he is, so far, a movie anachronism—a throwback to when there was a big market for nice. Utterly at ease in the camera's gaze, he's not a preener; he gives the impression of being an O.K. guy who in his spare time is also this teen heartthrob. Which may be a higher form of acting: star acting.

Efron's brand of star acting is a purring geniality that in an older man would make you want to vote for him. Movie stardom is a form of politics in which people vote by buying tickets. But the electorate is fickle. The Efron effect could be evanescent.

It's a truism that a TV star provides comfort—a presence viewers want to invite into their homes each week—while a movie star offers danger, some internal melodrama, a bit of menace promising thrills in the dark. For now, Efron is bridging those worlds, importing his *High School Musical* tweens to movie houses, where their money is good too. The streak looks to hold with the cannily bigenerational *17 Again*. Things will change, because he'll grow older and his current fans will grow up. But no one seems more prepared for that evolution, for his grownup closeup, than Zac Efron. ■

TELEVISION

CBS's *Psychic Friend*. *The Mentalist* shows that it's still possible to win a big network audience—with a trick or two

BY JAMES PONIEWOZIK

WE ALL KNOW BY NOW THE PROBLEMS WITH major-network TV. There are too many other channels, other media, other diversions. The audience has been sliced and diced into confetti, and it is no longer possible for a new drama to get tens of millions of viewers to sit down on their couches and watch the same thing at the same time.

And then there's *The Mentalist*. CBS's latest crime procedural, starring hunky Simon Baker as phony psychic turned sleuth Patrick Jane, is not just the biggest new hit of the season; it is arguably the only new hit of the season. It reliably draws huge audiences, even in weeks when it has run against *American Idol*—as many as 20 million viewers, nearly double the audience of the nearest new contender, Fox's *Fringe*.

There is, at first blush, no good reason for this. There is nothing unique or distinctive about *The Mentalist* (which is not to say that it's a bad show—more about that in a minute). There's no cutting-edge science, no fancy camera work, no how-did-they-think-of-that hook. Every week, Jane goes out, talks to people, observes details and solves uncomplicated cases the same way Colombo did 35 years ago. We've seen this a million times before on television.

And that's exactly the point.

In today's media environment, there are two ways broadcast networks can draw a big audience, as they did in the halcyon precable days. One is by programming series, like *Idol* and *Dancing with the Stars*, that are essentially sporting events. That is, they are simple to follow, they can be enjoyed by a wide demographic and age range, and—most important—they have no shelf life. There are winners and losers, and spoilers abound the next day. So you watch them that night, as they happen—not on DVR or Hulu—or you might as well not watch them at all. And that means you watch them with commercials, without which network TV becomes a charitable enterprise.

The other way is to program TV for the shrinking, but still substantial group

of people who don't want TV to change. There remains an audience unwilling to study quantum physics and comparative religion to watch *Lost*; who do not have a Slingbox stacked on a TiVo on top of an Apple TV; who simply want to turn on a TV set at the end of a long day and watch an uncomplicated damn TV show, in real time, on the hour, the way God intended.

This is CBS's audience—sometimes older, sometimes not, but generally more conservative in its tastes—and the network serves these people perfectly. While competitors make TV to court fickle view-

ers distracted by video games and the Internet, CBS—with crime shows like *NCIS* and sitcoms like *Two and a Half Men*—makes TV for people who like television. (How old school is *The Mentalist*? You can't even watch it online.)

That said, *The Mentalist* works because it's such an elegant example of its kind; if it's comfort food, it's prime-grade meat loaf. Much credit goes to the sly scripts, overseen by Bruno Heller (HBO's *Rome*), which take the viewer to familiar places by clever routes, providing a jocular corrective to the relentless noir gore of *CSI* et al. The mysteries are engaging but not Byzantine; you can probably figure out the culprit just a step before Jane does. And who doesn't want a handsome man to make him or her feel smart?

But chief credit goes to Baker, and not just because he's easy on the eyes. His (mildly) reformed flimflam man takes a cool, roguish pleasure in solving murders by reading the same tells and tics he once used to con people into thinking they were talking to dead loved ones. In one episode, he offhandedly tells a suspect woman what her type is—"sporty bad boys with

***The Mentalist* is an elegant example of its kind; if it's comfort food, it's prime-grade meat loaf**

a hidden masochistic streak"—and when she denies it, he grins and adds, matter-of-factly, "No, that was a bull's eye."

The joy of the scene is Jane's sheer satisfaction in figuring out what makes her tick; murder or no, he'd be glad to throw in the embarrassing revelation as a freebie. There's something creepy—but delightfully so—about how Jane looks at the rest of us as simple machines whose gears he can see whirring on the surface. CBS, which gets a 60% female audience for *The Mentalist*, has sold Jane as a woman's fantasy: "Finally, a man who listens." But really—and entertainingly—he's more like a superhero who listens in.

At this moment, the networks are finalizing their fall slates to announce to advertisers in May. Can they bring back the glory days by cloning a dozen *Mentalists*? Doubtful. The audience for throwback TV is limited, and CBS has close to a lock on it. But the competition is still likely to try. As Patrick Jane knows, people are greedy and prey to temptation, and they fall into predictable patterns of behavior. It doesn't take a psychic to see that. ■

The mentalist guy we know Jane (Baker) uses observations the way Superman used X-ray vision

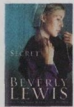




BOOKS

Love, Plain and Simple. Amish love stories, or "bonnet books," are the hot new trend in romance fiction

BY ANDREA SACHS



PUT ASIDE THAT TITILLATING vampire lit. Author Beverly Lewis has come up with a new magic formula for producing best-selling romance novels: humility, plainness and no sex. Lewis' G-rated books, set among the Old Order Amish in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, have sold more than 12 million copies, as bodice rippers make room for "bonnet books," chaste romances that chronicle the lives and loves of America's Amish.

Lewis has just published a new novel, *The Secret*, set in the idyllic village of Bird-in-Hand, which debuts on the New York *Times* paperback best-seller list April 19 at No. 10. Spurred by her success—and that of best-selling authors Cindy Woodsmall and Wanda Brunstetter (whose new book, *A Cousin's Promise*, is set among the Amish in Indiana)—more than a dozen other Christian-romance novelists are eschewing *Sex and the City*-type story lines for horse-and-buggy piety. "There still isn't enough inventory," marvels Avon Inspire's Cynthia DiTiberio,

who edits Shelley Shepard Gray, a recent entrant to this genre. And there's no shortage of demand: romance fiction, of which Amish-themed novels command a growing share, generates nearly \$1.4 billion in sales each year, and that number is rising.

Readers come away from bonnet books with an easy-to-digest history lesson and, *jah*, a little Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. There are occasional strident notes—a character or two who sound as if they'd be more at home at a Starbucks than at a Singing. But at their best, these books capture the quiet faith that suffuses Amish life. Which is not to say the Amish don't ever have fun. Most of the books are set during the characters' *Rumspringa*, or "running around" years, the time when the Amish lift the stringent rules for courting youth.

Lewis' books in particular are an anti-

Readers come away from bonnet books with an easy history lesson and, *jah*, a little Pennsylvania Dutch

dote to overstimulated nerves. The Amish (who number about 230,000, mostly in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana) are notable for what they reject—from televisions to electric kitchen appliances to zippers—which means a quiet environment for readers. The pace is slow and soothing; no conversations in Bird-in-Hand are interrupted by a ringing cell phone.

Still, simplicity doesn't necessarily mean serenity. In *The Secret*, Lettie Byler, a troubled wife and mother in a devout Amish home, is, for some mysterious reason, depressed and tearful. Eventually she disappears into the night, in what is "surely the most remarkable tittle-tattle to hit the area in recent years." *Englischers* (i.e., the non-Amish) might have steered Lettie into a psychiatrist's office for a course of Prozac. But Lettie's large family has other modes of counsel: talking and cooking and harvesting and raising barns and praying together. Her 21-year-old daughter Grace holds the family together with her steely determination; Judah, Lettie's uncommunicative husband, suffers her absence deeply.

It hardly sounds like the stuff of controversy, but Lewis' novels have been banned by some Amish leaders in Ohio because of theological differences. Perhaps unsurprisingly, that has not prevented the books from reaching an Amish readership. Lewis has received thousands of letters over the years from Amish fans. "I don't want to mislead you, Mrs. Lewis," confided a correspondent. "All of us are reading them under the covers." Barnes & Noble's religion-book buyer, Jane Love, confirms that sales are particularly strong in Amish areas.

Lewis came to the subject as a matter of genealogy. Her grandmother was a horse- and-buggy Mennonite who was shunned by her community for marrying a covenant preacher. "It was a very courageous move for her," says Lewis. "She was 18 when she left. She took off her head covering, and she decided that she was going to wear a simple gold wedding band, and she was excommunicated." Lewis' first novel, *The Shunning*, which told that story, was a surprise hit that sold more than a million copies. In all, she has written 87 books, many for children and teens.

Like her fellow chroniclers of the Amish, Lewis proves that it isn't necessary to lace every scene with lust to keep the reader's attention. Grace's suitor in *The Secret* tenderly proposes to her without ever having kissed her. "'Tis mighty *gut*," he says with deep affection. "Will you agree to be my bride?" That scene is not likely to be repeated outside Lancaster County anytime soon, but Bird-in-Hand is an appealing place for a jaded *Englischer* to escape to for a while—which is part of the romance, after all. ■

MUSIC

Old Masters, New Income. From the Beatles to the Beastie Boys, bands are courting fans with repackaged classics

BY JOSH TYRANGIEL

HOW MANY TIMES WILL YOU BUY A RECORD you love? The logical answer is once, since CDs and MP3s are all but indestructible, but logic has never had much to do with love or the record business. This year in particular, the industry is banking on the absence of logic. Scan a list of 2009's major releases and you'll discover almost as many reissues—repackaged classics with improved sound or added tracks—as originals. You may not be tempted by Lenny Kravitz's *Let Love Rule 20th Anniversary Deluxe Edition* or Average White Band's re-pressed *Cut the Cake*—generally you have to want something once before wanting it twice. But in May, Universal will begin reissuing the Rolling Stones' 14 most recent albums, while in September, EMI and Apple Corps will reissue all 12 of the Beatles' studio albums. By October, logic be damned, many baby boomers will be a few hundred dollars lighter.

The relationship between record companies and reissue buyers has not historically been built on good faith. Anyone who owns one of the nine versions of the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, each with its own seductive "extra" features, knows it's a lot more like the relationship between Charlie Brown and Lucy. But after years of selling slightly improved old goods at steep new

prices, at least a few labels have started focusing on quality control. "In this day and age and economy, we have to make something remarkable, or we're not going to be able to compete," says Adam Block, general manager of Legacy Recordings, Sony's catalog and archive arm. "We have to start with a great record and then figure out how to make the experience even greater."

Boomers are fish in a barrel for improved nostalgia, but Gen X isn't far behind. In early April, Sony reissued four physical editions of Pearl Jam's 1992 album *Ten* at four price points. Each offered improved sound, a separate remix album, a DVD and thoughtful, creative packaging born of collaboration with the band. (A digital version without the extras is also available.) More important, Block's team reached out to Pearl Jam's fans and asked specific questions about what they wanted. In their first week of release, the various *Tens* combined to sell 55,000 copies—including an astonishing 10,000 of the \$199 collector's edition.

Pearl Jam sold 55,000 copies of its reissued *Ten*—10,000 of them collector's editions for \$199—in one week

"People don't love music any less today than they ever have," says Block, who also oversaw last year's well-received \$109.98 *Miles Davis: Kind of Blue: 50th Anniversary Collector's Edition*. "The right presentation still gets a response."

So does the right selection. Most reissues are by acts with rabid fan bases (U2 put out a souped-up version of *The Joshua Tree* last year; Bruce Springsteen recently announced plans for a new *Darkness on the Edge of Town*) that have both cash and nostalgia in abundance. Rap? Not many reissues. The Grateful Dead? Too many to count. Older bands fare better for technological reasons; advances in transferring music from analog to digital mean that most records from the '70s and '80s sound demonstrably better, even to amateur ears. "That's a big selling point," says Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys, who are in the midst of reissuing three of their early albums. "People who care about sound *really* care. Our records were too tiny and didn't have enough low end. We've fixed that."

The true test of the reissue market's strength and revenue-generating power will come in September. The Beatles' albums haven't been touched since their original transfer to CD in 1987. Early word is that the remastered records sound great, though because of disagreements with Apple, they probably won't be available on iTunes, and the extras—mostly making-of documentaries—are a little underwhelming. They'll probably sell anyway, but if the Beatles and EMI are feeling just, they'll remember that the money they take from reissues is equal to the love they make them with. ■

All-stars The roster of reissues in 2009 rivals the original albums in sales and prestige



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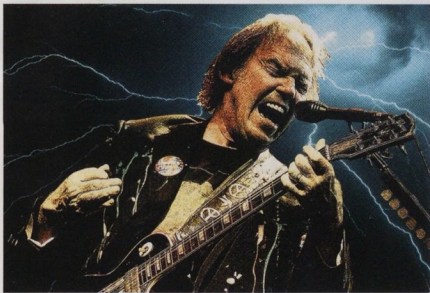
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Short List

TIME'S PICKS FOR THE WEEK



1 ALBUM Fork in the Road

Someone finally made a record about biodiesel! Naturally, that person is Neil Young, owner of a biodiesel Hummer and more odd musical ideas than any other rock legend. At times hilariously devoted to its conceit, *Fork* rises above it on the strength of the songs' hooks and Young's guileless quaver.

2 BOOK This Is Water

In 2005 novelist David Foster Wallace (*Infinite Jest*) gave a graduation speech about living life with awareness and compassion. He committed suicide last year, but the speech has become an Internet classic. Now it's a book: think of it as *The Last Lecture* for intellectuals.

3 THEATER Reasons to Be Pretty

Neil LaBute, America's great chronicler of the unbridgeable chasm between the sexes, is at the top of his form in this play about a breakup and its aftermath. Tight, tense and emotionally true, it's a little slight for Broadway but still the best new play of the season.

4 MOVIE Every Little Step

Is there a trade that demands more skill and devotion for less chance of employment than that of a Broadway dancer? Detailing the casting process for a revival of *A Chorus Line*, this documentary proves more compelling and heartbreaking than a whole season of *Dancing with the Stars*.

5 BOOK Vanished Smile

In August 1911 the *Mona Lisa* was swiped from the Louvre. R.A. Scotti's deft account of the crime and its aftermath draws bumbling investigators, aristocratic con men and Picasso into a story that La Gioconda herself would have smiled at—enigmatically, of course.

Arts Online
For more reviews and openings this weekend, go to time.com/entertainment



Bryan Cranston's Short List

Portraying a nerdy high school chemistry teacher and family man turned druglord on *Breaking Bad* earned Bryan Cranston a Best Actor Emmy last year. This season he's worn two hats, also directing the show's first episode. Here are some of the activities keeping him occupied when he isn't cooking up crystal meth on television.

Floating

In a sea of green. My family and I decided to build a second home using largely reusable or renewable building materials and products—including the furniture. We started recycling long before it became fashionable, so this home will be an extension of that philosophy. There's even some interest in making a TV show of our progress. Stay tuned.

Watching

I confess to secretly being engrossed in the series *Mad Men*. Secretly, because it feels like a soap opera, only for men—one that sells manly soap, like Irish Spring, or Axe deodorant spray. Anyway, pass the bonbons and keep quiet. That Don Draper is up to something. I just know it.

Reading

I stumbled upon a new (to me) writer, Scott Lasser. He hit a home run with *Battle Creek* (I'm a sucker for a baseball story). Now I've picked up *The Year That Follows* (I'm a sucker for a mystery), and I find myself devouring it nightly. Write on, Scott!

Learning

The female equivalent of an executor is an executrix.

Discovering

The way to get a good turnout at a high school father-daughter dance is a) offer Vegas gaming, b) no dancing.





Joel

Stein

Should I Opt for Circumcision? Whoa! Not for me—for my unborn son. My family's debate over the unkindest cut

I KNEW HAVING A CHILD WOULD FORCE ME TO EXAMINE my life, but I didn't expect to have to start with my penis. When my wife and I found out we were having a boy, everyone asked if we were going to circumcise him. All I knew was that circumcision is something the U.S. does and Europe doesn't and is therefore awesome. Our penises are clean and sleek and new like Frank Gehry skyscrapers, while theirs are crumbling, ancient edifices inhabited by fat old men in hats.

But when I thought about it, there was something disturbing about the fact that someone had chopped off part of my penis—a part that not only had nerve endings and a protective function but also could have made me look bigger. When I presented these arguments to my lovely wife Cassandra, she told me to shut up. Her argument was largely based on aesthetics and involved a lot of detailed talk about the surprising number of men she had dated. It's hard to win a debate when you're busy covering your ears and singing to yourself.

I argued that our son would not feel embarrassed either way, since compared with American babies in the 1960s, when 90% got snipped, about half of newborns are now deforeskinned—and only about 30% of California infants. I went on Facebook to ask if being made fun of in the locker room was apocryphal. What I learned is that even Facebook users disapprove of making parental decisions on Facebook. And kids probably don't make fun of one another, since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that only 69% of circumcised and 65% of uncircumcised adolescents know which one they are. Also, you don't need to be Don Rickles to respond to someone's mockery of your foreskin with a casual "Dude, why are you staring at my penis?"

All I knew was that this is clearly not a decision I should be making for another human being. What school he attends, what he eats, which bouncy seat he should bounce in—sure. Whether to alter your genitals for aesthetic reasons is a question meant for your mid-20s at Burning Man.

Still, I knew this decision was going to be made now or never, so I started asking every medical professional, woman and gay man what kind of penis they preferred, which, to my shock, got me a lot of dinner invitations.

Though there seemed to be a slight aesthetic preference for not wearing a hat and a slight functional preference for keeping one on, no one had a really good argument for giving your baby plastic surgery. A pediatrician told me the sole reason he circumcised his son was so that the kid looked like him. If my son looks at my penis and the biggest difference he notices is foreskin, I have far more serious problems. Plus, if I wanted my son to look like me, I wouldn't have worked so hard to marry someone better-looking than I am.

It turns out, though, that there's an enormous group of people who would argue passionately for my son's foreskin. Francis Crick and Jonas Salk were among

the Nobel laureates who signed a petition to the World Court to end circumcision. The last week of March was Genital Integrity Awareness Week, which included a march from the White House to the Capitol, which, while not far in miles, is an eternity when measured in baby foreskins. This cause is so real, it has its own ribbon. There's even a group called Jews Against Circumcision, made up almost exclusively of Jews whose parents no longer talk to them.

The antisnipping crusaders argue that the ancient Greeks

rejected this violent tribal custom of the Jews and Muslims; hardly anyone practices it anymore besides those groups and Americans. They argue that the Jews created it as a way either to exclude women from their club or to ritualize the sacrifice of the firstborn male. They say it was brought to the U.S. in Victorian times only as a means of reducing masturbation by limiting sensation, in what has to be the biggest failed medical experiment in history.

Cassandra would not hear any of this. She felt strongly that our son should feel Jewish and that when she bathes him, she shouldn't have to touch his penis too much. And then last month, a study from Africa showed that circumcision greatly reduces the chances of catching a sexually transmitted disease. And I had lost my argument.

So in a few weeks, I'm going to buy some bagels, call a mohel who is also a pediatric surgeon and believes in local anesthetic, and do something that I'm pretty sure is wrong. I have a horrible feeling that all of parenthood is like this. ■



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